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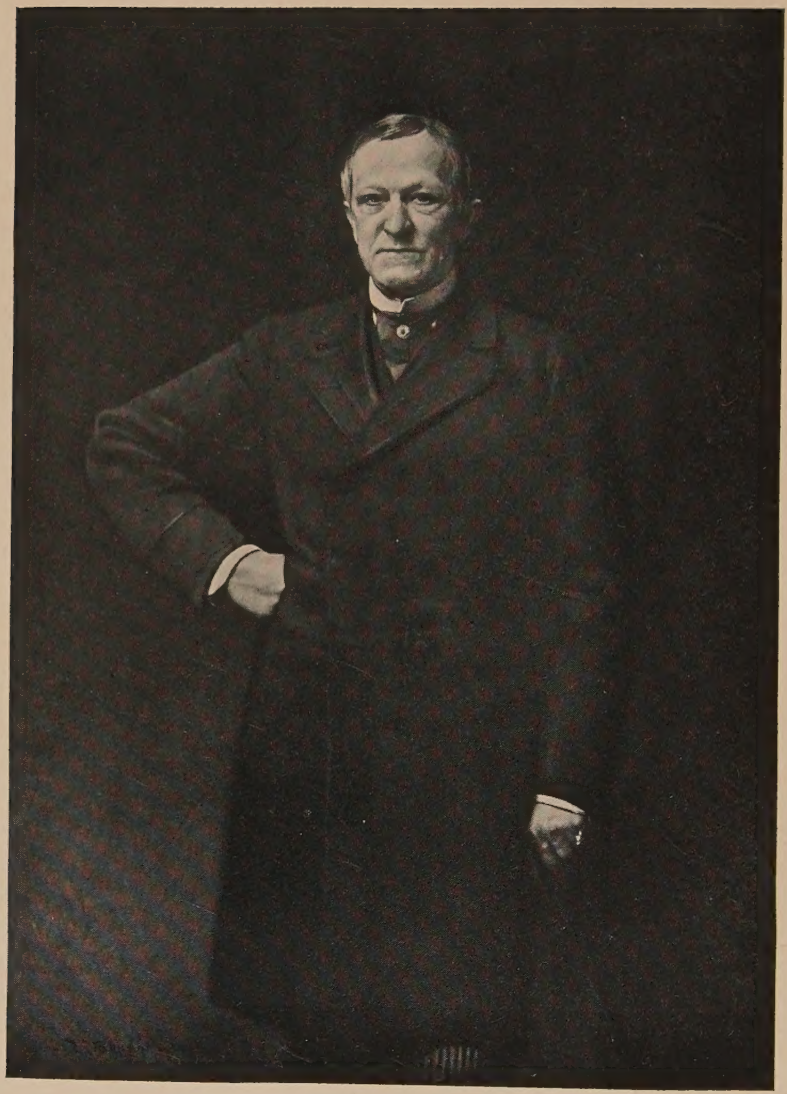

LEVI PARSONS MORTON

From the portrait by Bonnat, 1882

LEVI PARSONS MORTON

BANKER, DIPLOMAT AND STATESMAN

By

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LEVI PARSONS MORTON

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This Volume is Dedicated
To the Grandchildren
of
Levi Parsons Morton

PREFACE

To write the first biography of an important public man is necessarily a difficult task; but in the case of Levi P. Morton it has proved more than ordinarily difficult, by virtue of the fact that his life touched three great fields of activity, politics (state and national), business (national and international), and diplomacy. In consequence, material had to be sought in many cities and in two continents.

My first acknowledgment is due to my friend, the late Gaillard Hunt, who, but for his untimely death, would have been Mr. Morton's biographer. His work, though only a beginning, made easier the task of his successor, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge indebtedness to him, and to pay tribute to his memory.

To the late Myron T. Herrick, American Ambassador to France, I am indebted for the privilege of studying the records of Mr. Morton's life as Minister to France preserved in the Embassy at Paris.

The chief sources employed, including Mr. Morton's own collection of manuscripts and scrap-books, have been deposited in the New York Public Library, to whose trustees and officials I wish to offer my grateful acknowledgment for generous hospitality which extended over several years. Similar acknowledgments are due also to the authorities of the

British Museum and Public Records Office, the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library, the Athenæum Library, the Widener Library, and the Massachusetts Historical Society.

ROBERT MCELROY.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY,
October 14, 1929.

INTRODUCTION

Levi Parsons Morton belonged to a class which is rapidly disappearing, but the influence of which has been widely diffused, that of the New Englander rooted in the ancestral soil through descent in every line from the original settlers. Eighty of his ancestors are known to have been in New England before the middle of the seventeenth century, and it is believed that if further time were given to the investigation, all Mr. Morton's colonist forefathers would be found here before that date. If this is the case, it would be interesting to ascertain whether a parallel can still be found, or whether, dying at so great an age, he was the last of his type.

In any case, it is to colonial New England that the biographer must look for the formative influences which shaped Mr. Morton's character. He was born in Shoreham, Addison County, Vermont, in 1824. At that time most of the villages of Vermont were still pioneer settlements, reproducing the characteristics of frontier towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut a century or so earlier. Possessing only the most primitive means of communication with each other and with the outside world, these little towns were self contained to an extraordinary degree, and their

outstanding characteristics were independence and self reliance.

A historian of Addison County remarks that the early period was very unfavorable to the interests of religion, and that "loose and skeptical sentiments" had become common among the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary army who had been recently demobilized and were among the first settlers. The frontier settlements of Vermont were looked upon as fields for missionary effort, and two missionaries from Connecticut, the Reverend Ammi Ruhamah Robbins and the Reverend Peter Starr, came to Shoreham in 1794 and organized the Congregational Church. But they could not stay, and for some years the church was without a pastor, and depended upon the somewhat irregular ministrations of Paul Menona, a native Indian of whom it was drily remarked that his eloquence often moved himself to tears, and sometimes drew tears from his auditors. The first settled pastor had trouble with his congregation and was dismissed after four years. So when in 1814 the Reverend Daniel Oliver Morton came to Shoreham, bringing to the parsonage his devout young bride, the town was ready for a more substantial ministry, the good success of which is evident in its duration of seventeen years.

Daniel Oliver Morton was in the seventh generation of the family in America, six generations of which had lived in the Morton house in Middleboro, Massachusetts. He was the first of the family to enter the ministry, which he did shortly after his graduation from Middlebury College in 1812. His ministry in Shoreham was fruitful, and the membership of

the church increased largely, especially during a revival of religion in the summer of 1821. His preaching was strictly and somewhat rigidly Calvinistic, but his personal character softened and made persuasive his appeal. One of his daughters said that the congregation regarded him as "the holiest man since the Apostles,"—a tender extravagance so foreign to the usual reticence of a New England congregation as to constitute a striking testimonial to the minister's sanctity of character. All the children remembered well their father's "praying chair." When seated in this chair it was understood that he was never on any account to be interrupted.

Lucretia Morton, like her husband, came from a New England home which for generations had sheltered a family under a single roof. The Parsons of Northampton were a priestly line: from 1697 no generation of the family had failed to provide the church with one or more ministers. Lucretia's brother, Levi Parsons, became one of the first foreign missionaries under the American Board, and went to Palestine. He wrote home frequently, and his letters, read and re-read as though their messages possessed apostolic authority, were carefully collected and frequently consulted by his devoted sister. He died at Alexandria in Egypt in 1822, and it is probable that in naming their son for this missionary uncle it was the hope of his parents that he would follow in his uncle's footsteps. But the boy was more a Morton than a Parsons, and showed no inclination for the ministry. His aged grandfather, the Reverend Justin Sheldon Parsons, looked upon his choice of a business career with profound misgivings, and was especially

disturbed by the young merchant's evident success. "I hear," he wrote, "that Levi is prospering in this world's goods. I fear lest it be at cost to his soul."

For more than a century the Mortons of Middleboro had been active in civil affairs connected with the business, politics and government of colonial New England, while the Parsons were engrossed with matters of religion. Levi Parsons Morton reverted to the paternal type. The Morton contribution to his career is evident in many ways, in the political inclination, in the temperate and equable judgment, in the engaging kindliness of personal demeanor. The acerbity of Puritanism had yielded to the geniality of secular human contacts, and Mr. Morton, like his Middleboro forebears, knew his world. But the mother's contribution, though less apparent, affected his character no less profoundly. It gave him a depth and tenderness of domestic affection characteristic of the Parsons family, and although it did not win him for the ministry, it transmitted a Puritan reverence for the sacredness of time and of the Sabbath in particular as a day set apart, and it taught him the heinousness of wasting time in idleness or upon trivial occupations. It also endowed him with the uncompromising integrity which characterized Puritanism at its best, an integrity which refuses to be governed by the passing judgments and changing standards of contemporary morals and constantly refers its problems to the uncorrupted tribunal of the conscience. In the decades succeeding the Civil War the legal safeguards by which the interests of the public are now protected were nearly if not altogether lacking, but Mr. Morton's New England

conscience stood him in good stead and kept his fame fair, even when judged by the more exacting standards of the present time.

Mr. Morton greatly valued his New England inheritance. On more than one occasion he referred with affection to "the story of self-denial, of suffering and romance, of struggle and victory which delight and instruct mankind," and remarked that the story cannot be made more thrilling than by its simple recital. But it may be doubted whether he himself realized the extent to which the Puritan tradition had entered into and molded his own character. There were in his character elements of deep-rooted stability which came to him through generations of upright, hard-working, God-fearing men and women, and which added to his natural endowment of robust physical health the moral virtues which make for longevity: patience, temperance, steadfastness. To this inheritance Mr. Morton also owed one of the most interesting of his personal characteristics, his extraordinary reticence. Beneath a kind and approachable personality there was at all times a wall of impenetrable reserve. The essence of Puritanism is reticence. To the Puritan the soul appears in awful isolation with respect to its destinies; it lives alone and dies in solitude, while its "eternal accountability," as Daniel Webster described it, invests its fate with austere loneliness. Levi Parsons the missionary knew the meaning of this spiritual isolation and in many a solemn letter imparted the knowledge to his Puritan sister: she in turn bequeathed it to his namesake who was her son.

This trait is most baffling to a biographer, as the

writer has occasion to know. When asked to furnish personal reminiscences, Mr. Morton was most kind and considerate; he wished to co-operate, but he did not know how. He was willing to talk about his brother Daniel, whom he idolized, and whose untimely death was one of the few great sorrows of a singularly happy life, but he would not talk about himself. All that there was to show for an interview lasting for two hours were answers to two point-blank questions. When asked what feature of his early life he regarded as most remarkable, he replied that it was that he got ahead in the world with so little formal schooling. In answer to the question what event in his political career had afforded him the greatest pleasure, he referred to a dinner given in his honor by the entire Senate upon his retirement from office, a compliment which he valued because of its non-partisan character.

The story of how this Vermont boy, so deeply rooted in New England, left home at an early age and made his way sure-footedly to wealth, fame, and far-reaching influence is a story that happily is not unique. New England parsonages can furnish many a parallel of equally merited success. What invests it with exceptional interest is that it is the story of success in two fields. At a time when most business men consider that their work is done and that they are justified in slowing down, Mr. Morton began a totally different and equally arduous career by his entrance into politics.

The happiest pages of this life history have not been and cannot very well be introduced into the chronicle which follows, because of their intimate

character. Anna Livingston Morton was one of those whose own story is written in the lives and characters of others. Beautiful, accomplished, and singularly noble-minded, she lived and died without a thought of self, and although a woman of great force, she lost herself in her relationships; absorbed in her devotion to her husband and her children, her loyalty was not relative but absolute. Discussing with her husband every question which interested him, bringing to their common problems sanity, generosity and wisdom, and assisting him in the spacious hospitalities of Newport, Paris and Washington, she made possible wider reaches of fulfilment for Mr. Morton's native gifts. In her own ecclestiastical tradition she was as deeply religious as his own other-worldly parents: indeed, she was as truly a mystic as Lucretia Morton herself. Her companionship was Mr. Morton's greatest joy and inspiration; he was lost without her, and he could not long survive the loss.

In the opinion of the writer, Dr. McElroy has been well advised to enlarge upon Mr. Morton's services in connection with the famous *Alabama* Claims dispute. We were nearer to a disastrous break with England than is generally recognized, and the peaceable settlement of this acute difficulty inaugurated a new epoch in the settlement of international disputes. The service quietly and effectively rendered by Mr. Morton played no small part in bringing about the happy issue. The time has come when such services to the cause of international peace are beginning to be more justly rated, and it may well be that his part in this affair will outrank in importance even the generous benefactions which led to the opening for public

worship of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, with which his name and memory are now indissolubly linked.

HOWARD CHANDLER ROBBINS.

HEATH, MASSACHUSETTS,
August 28, 1929.

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LEVI PARSONS MORTON

LEVI PARSONS MORTON

CHAPTER I

INTELLECTUAL INHERITANCE

In the year 1609, a certain English vessel, the *Sea Venture*, commanded by Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Somers, was wrecked upon one of the Bermuda islands, then known as the Bermoothes, and its crew suffered many hardships before their escape ten months later. In 1610 Starchey's narrative of their adventures fell into the hands of William Shakespeare and helped to inspire the *Tempest*, which was played before the king in 1611. With the insight of genius, however, Shakespeare omitted the history, and employed only the inspiration; otherwise Levi Parsons Morton's first American maternal ancestor, Stephen Hopkins, might have figured in that great drama, for he was a not inconspicuous companion of Gates and Somers. Indeed, his own experiences in Bermuda were more distressing than those of his companions: for, being of an independent mind, and little fond of discipline, he ventured to advance the theory that having engaged to serve the Virginia Company in Virginia,

he was released from the obligations imposed by that engagement by virtue of the fact that the expedition had landed him in Bermuda. For this heresy, denominated treason, he was tried by court-martial and condemned to death. The execution was however prevented by the interposition of the Admiral, Sir George Somers; and Stephen Hopkins lived to return to England and sail on the *Mayflower* eleven years later. His name stands fourteenth on Bradford's list of *Mayflower* passengers, and fourteenth on the list of the signers of the *Mayflower* compact, which Nathaniel Morton later published in his *New England's Memorial*, the most authentic list of signers extant.[1] In 1687 the granddaughter of Stephen Hopkins, Miss Mary Ring, married one John Morton of Middleboro, Massachusetts, grandson of the first American Morton, George Morton of Plymouth.

Upon American soil, the Mortons, from George to John, and from John to Levi Parsons, have left so clear an impression that few genealogical problems remain. George Morton of Plymouth was born at Austerfeld, in 1585, five years after the "Brownists" had established their first church, and three years before a misguided orthodox enthusiasm on the part of the Established Church made their first martyrs.

If heredity and environment had produced the

[1] No official and authentic list of the signers of the *Mayflower* Compact is known: Bradford gives a list of the passengers who sailed on the *Mayflower*, and Nathaniel Morton gives a list of signers of the Compact which followed roughly Bradford's list of passengers, but the order is not the same. In view of the close intimacy between the two writers, however, it seems likely that Bradford checked over Morton's list before it was published. We have, however, no evidence of such revision.

normal result, George Morton would doubtless have grown up an enemy of the Separatist movement which the Brownists represented: but, as Hunter, in his *Founders of New England*, quaintly expresses it, he "so far departed from the spirit and principles of his family as to have fallen into the ranks of the Protestant Puritans and Separatists," doubtless through the personal influence of William Brewster, as the Morton home was near Scrooby, where the eloquent John Robinson and "Elder" Brewster had fed their Separatist flock before its flight to Holland in 1608.

As a young convert, George Morton joined the Pilgrim exiles from Austerfeld and Scrooby at Leyden, married a Pilgrim maiden, Juliana Carpenter, in 1612, and became the father of two sons and two daughters, before the first American migration of 1620. A competent man of affairs, he won business leadership among the Pilgrim Colony in Leyden, and took a leading part in organizing the *Mayflower* expedition. It was his earnest desire himself to sail with this first Puritan expedition, but, in the interest of the cause, he reluctantly consented to await a later voyage. Into his hands came, therefore, the letters and official reports of the Puritans who founded Plymouth: and these he wove into a volume now famous as *Mourt's Relation*. Its actual title, however, is less simple: "Relation or Journal of the beginning and proceedings of the English plantations settled at Plimoth in New England, by certain English Adventurers both merchants and others. With their difficult passage, their safe arrival, their joyful building of and comfortable planting them-

selves in the now well defended Towne of New Plymouth."

Mourt's Relation, first published in London in 1622, was used by Captain John Smith in the preparation of his *General History of Virginia*, and was embodied, in abridged form, in *Purchase His Pilgrims*. It is proper therefore to regard it as the first American history. For some unknown reason it is signed G. Mourt, not George Morton, but there is a general agreement among critics that "G. Mourt" was George Morton, and that the main body of the *Relation* was written by William Bradford and Edward Winslow. George Morton's personal contribution was the preface, which shows the culture, and, even more, the spiritual earnestness of this strong old Puritan. "Courteous reader," it says, "be entreated to make a favorable construction of my forwardness in publishing these ensuing discourses. The desire of carrying the Gospel of Christ into those foreign parts, amongst those people that as yet have had no knowledge nor taste of God, as also to procure unto themselves and others a quiet and comfortable habitation, were amongst other things, the inducements unto these undertakers of the then hopeful, and now experimentally known good enterprise for plantation in New England, to set afoot and prosecute the same. And though it fared with them, as it is common to the most actions of this nature, that the first attempts prove difficult as the sequel more at large expresseth, yet it hath pleased God, even beyond our expectation in so short a time, to give hope of letting some of them see (though some of them He hath taken out of this vale

of tears) some grounds of hope, of the accomplishment of both those ends by them at first propounded.

"And as myself then much desired, and shortly hope to effect, if the Lord will, the putting to of my shoulder in this hopeful business, and in the meantime these *Relations* coming to my hand from my both known and faithful friends, on whose writings I do much rely, I thought it not amiss to make them more general, hoping of a cheerful proceeding both of adventures and planters; entreating that the example of the honorable Virginia and Bermudas Companies, encountering with so many disasters and that for divers years together with an unwearied resolution, the good effects whereof are now eminent, may prevail as a spur of preparation also touching this no less hopeful country, though yet an infant, the extent and commodities whereof as yet are not fully known; after time will unfold more. Such as desire to take knowledge of things, may inform themselves by this ensuing treatise, and if they please, also by such as have been there a first and second time.

"My hearty prayer to God is that the event of this and all other honorable and honest undertakings, may be for the furtherance of the Kingdom of Christ, the enlarging of the bounds of our sovereign lord King James, and the good and profit of those who, either by purse, or person, or both, are agents in the same. So I take leave and rest.

"Thy Friend."

A copy of the original edition of *Mourt's Relation* is preserved in the collection of Charles Deane of

Cambridge, Massachusetts; and, through numerous later editions, it has influenced every historian of New England, and still holds its place among accepted sources.

Thus it chanced that Levi Parsons Morton's second American ancestor, George Morton, compiled the history of his first American ancestor, Stephen Hopkins, for in the incidents recorded in *Mourt's Relation* Hopkins was a not inconspicuous participant. The *Journal of the Pilgrims*, under date, November 17, 1620, names him among Governor Bradford's exploring party, and tells the story of the warning which he gave too late. The advanced guard had observed an Indian device carefully established under a tree, which Stephen Hopkins declared to be a deer trap. "So as we were looking at it," says the Journal, "William Bradford being in the rear, when he came, looked also upon it; and as he went about, it gave a sudden jerk up, and he was immediately caught by the leg."

During the spring of 1623, George Morton prepared to fulfill the plan hinted at in the words of his introduction, "the putting of my shoulder in this hopeful business." He sailed for Plymouth on *The Ann*, with a shipload of colonists, most if not all of whom owed their journey to him. In John Camden Hotten's "Original list of persons of quality, emigrants, religious exiles, political rebels," appears the "list of those who came over in *The Ann* and *Little James*, and it contains this entry: "George Morton; he brought with him his son, Nathaniel, and four other children."

The Ann, carrying this third migration—the last

to be classed as "Fathers"—landed at Plymouth in June, 1623, and within a year of his landing George Morton died. Nathaniel, his son, in his *New England's Memorial*, later paid this tribute to his father's memory:

"Mr. George Morton was a pious, gracious servant of God, and very faithful in whatsoever public employment he was betrusted withal, and an unfeigned well-willer, and according to his sphere and condition, a suitable promoter of the common good and growth of the plantation of New Plymouth; laboring to still the discontents that sometimes would arise amongst some spirits, by occasion of the difficulties of these new beginnings; but it pleased God to put a period to his days soon after his arrival in New England, not surviving a full year after his coming ashore. With much comfort and peace he fell asleep in the Lord, in the month of June, anno 1624."

This same son, Nathaniel, second of the Morton literary-landmark makers of New England, had been born in Leyden, in 1613, and, after reaching Plymouth, was reared in the family of his uncle, Governor Bradford, who, on August 14, 1623, had married Alice Carpenter, sister of Mrs. George Morton. Nathaniel's abilities plus the Governor's assistance caused him to be chosen Secretary of the Colony, when he reached man's estate, and for forty years he occupied this post of honor. The chief records of the Plymouth Colony are in his handwriting; and when the New England Confederation was founded, in 1643, he became its Secretary also, thus leaving its records too as his monument. In addition, he prepared and published at Cambridge

in 1669 "*New England's Memorial, or a Brief Relation of the Most Memorable and Remarkable Passages of the Providence of God Manifested to the Planters of New England,*" a book still highly prized as an authoritative source of early American history.

The progenitor of Levi Parsons Morton was however not Nathaniel, but John, the second son of George Morton of Plymouth and Juliana Carpenter, his wife. He also came to Plymouth on *The Ann*, and life under the keen eye of Governor Bradford, developed him, too, into a Plymouth official. In 1648, he was admitted a freeman of the Colony; and held in turn many important positions; constable, member of the grand inquest, deputy to the General Court, tax assessor, selectman, and Collector of Excise. Such honors gave him the title of "the Honorable John Morton"; but they failed to stifle or satisfy the pioneer spirit which was his birthright. He therefore turned his back upon them all and, joining an exodus to Middleboro, Massachusetts, became one of the twenty-six original proprietors and founders of that village which he was chosen to represent in 1670 as its first delegate to the General Court. Here he built the old Morton house which was handed down from father to son in the Morton family for two hundred years, and long remained the oldest house in Plymouth County. It was at last removed to make room for a road which might as profitably have taken some other course. Such is too often the fate of the historic landmarks of America.

If one could reproduce the conversations, the thoughts, the scenes witnessed by that old Morton home, it would be easy to re-create most of the

history of the origin and development of the United States. Through the frontier days of Indian wars, through the years of haunting visions of invasions from French Canada, through the thrilling times of Leisler's Congress, the Albany Congress, the Stamp Act, and Townshend Acts, the rides of Committees of Correspondence, and the march of red-coats; through the discouraging period of the failure of the Confederation and the hopes fostered by the great Federal Convention of 1787; from Washington's oath as President to the stormy days of Andrew Johnson, Thaddeus Stevens and the reunion after civil war, the old house stood; while within, the passing show of a nation in building was discussed, by actors, witnesses, and contemporaries.

Of the nine children, born there to Hon. John Morton and his wife, Lettice (Hanford?), the first, named John, died in infancy; the second, also called John, most nearly continued the tradition of intellectual leadership established by his grandfather, George, and his uncle, Nathaniel; for to him history ascribes the high honor of having built the first absolutely free school in America, built and kept by him at Plymouth in 1671. His second son by his second wife, Mary Ring, descendant of Stephen Hopkins, was called Ebenezer, according to the courageously pious custom of early Puritan days. He left behind him a record as a leading citizen of Middleboro, Massachusetts, where he held, at one time or another, most of the offices of importance, including that of Captain of Militia. His son, by his first wife, Mercy Foster, he had called Ebenezer also, but with him the name had lapsed.

The line was perpetuated, however, for this second Ebenezer married a charming widow, Mrs. Sarah Cobb, and their son, called by the classical name, Livy, lived to fight the battles of his native land in the American Revolution. He served in the second company of Colonel Sprout's regiment of Massachusetts Militia, in 1776; in the sea-coast defense of Rhode Island of later date; in two alarms of May and September, 1778; and in Colonel White's Militia regiment in August, 1780. His marriage to Hannah Dailey (Levi Parsons Morton's grandmother) took place on March 13, 1788, after the stormy days of Revolution were over, but in the scarcely less dangerous days immediately preceding the inauguration of the Federal Constitution. In young manhood Livy Morton had left his native town of Middleboro to settle in what was then known as the Plymouth grant, or Kennebec Purchase, which was opened in 1764, and he was thus among the early settlers of Maine. The First Congregational Church at Winthrop, Maine, was established through his activities, in 1800: but in later years he returned to the home of his birth, in Middleboro, where he died on July 19, 1838, the year in which his grandson, Levi Parsons Morton, began his active business career at the age of fourteen.

The eldest child of Livy Morton and his first wife, Hannah Dailey, was Daniel Oliver Morton, father of the subject of this biography. He was born, on December 21, 1788, in the town of Winthrop, Maine, then within the territory of Massachusetts, where his parents were residing at the time of his birth, although still looking upon Middleboro as home.

Reared in the strictest sect of the Puritan, under the strengthening influence of the faith that had made many martyrs in the days described by George and Nathaniel Morton, Daniel had experienced "a call" to the ministry when but eighteen years of age. While teaching school, "some distance from home, in a wicked place," to use his own words, "I experienced a renovation of heart and found peace in believing. The Lord met me, convinced me of sin, of righteousness, and judgment, and gave me peace and joy which the world knoweth not of."

In 1808 he entered Middlebury College, led by a light that never failed him, although, at times, as he later confessed, "I had some doubts and misgivings." Four years later, having received his degree, he turned his energies to his theological studies, in the course of which, fate, or, as he himself would have expressed it, "Divine Providence," led him to seek a final training in the home of a famous clergyman of Pittsfield, Vermont, the Rev. Justin Parsons, who supplemented his professional income by teaching theology to youthful divines, not yet established in parishes.

But Daniel's companionship was not limited to that of his preceptor. It was freely extended to the latter's daughter, Lucretia, who taught the South Hill district school, located three miles from her home. The intervening area, like the country in every direction, was then heavily wooded, and infested with wolves and other wild beasts, and the Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton often left his books in order to furnish her his protection on her lonely walks to her post of duty. The details of their con-

versations have not been preserved: but they may be readily imagined, in the light of the one love letter which has survived. It is dated July 14, 1813, and abounds in such pious expressions as the following: "Dear Lucretia, do remember our family in all your prayers"; "When Brother W. died, I felt my affections resting more on you, for I felt the attractions of friendship toward you before; and I have experienced similar sensations since the departure of my Brother Joseph. But earthly hopes may soon be blasted; and friends now separated may meet no more!"

"P.S. I am glad you are in school, for I think if the school is not large it will be conducive to health. Some of the children whom you now instruct may live and act a conspicuous part when we shall be sleeping in the dust. I hope you will have grace rightly to instruct them and fervently to pray for them. It would be very well to pray before them if you feel a freedom. Do all the good you can; God will be glorifying your exertions, whether others are benefitted or not." And he signed himself, "a Pilgrim of Zion now resident in New Port."

Despite the rather disheartening prophecy that "friends now separated may meet no more," the Pilgrim of Zion shortly returned to Pittsfield, and the walks were resumed: but soon came another interruption. The Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton was elected Pastor of the Congregational Church at Shoreham, Vermont, a village four miles from Lake Champlain, opposite historic Ticonderoga. Sadly he sought his field of labor, alone; but returned within a few months to claim Lucretia for the manse. It is stated that at the reception preceding the marriage,

the bridegroom spoke from the text: "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour."

Back to the village of Shoreham went the bride and bridegroom, carrying with them, as the heritage of both families, a sense of the majesty of their divine calling, a majesty which was expected to sustain itself, and which did sustain itself, upon a salary of $600 a year.

Lucretia Parsons, like her husband, belonged to an old Colonial family. On her father's side she was a descendant of Cornet Joseph Parsons, who is believed to have been the son of Sir Thomas Parsons of Great Milton, England. He came to Massachusetts with the great migration of 1630 and was associated with the founding of Springfield in 1636. In 1655 he removed from Springfield to the new settlement of Northampton which he helped to found, and of which he was one of the first selectmen, only escaping service a second year by paying twenty shillings exemption money.

In 1646 he married the beautiful, talented and spirited Mary Bliss who before the end of 1672 bore him twelve children. By that date, he had risen to a position of great prominence in the Colony. He was Cornet, third in command, of the New Hampshire troops, and, as a civilian leader, he had been entrusted with many delicate Indian negotiations, for his business as a fur-trader had given him unusual skill in such negotiations.

In 1674 he purchased of one John Bliss a spacious house at South Farms, where his family found ample accommodations and where seven generations of his

descendants were destined to live and die. His business of fur trading was highly profitable, his wife highly attractive, and his children numerous enough to satisfy the heart of a patriarch.

Then the terrible witchcraft delusion appeared, and before it ended, nineteen persons had been hanged for witchcraft, and one old man, Giles Corey, had been pressed to death under a heavy weight for refusing to plead either "guilty" or "not guilty." Mary Bliss Parsons was among the first accused, the accusation resulting, as was later believed, from the jealousy of a childless woman, Sarah Bridgman, who could not endure this neighbor who had borne seven sons to her husband. But whatever its inception, such a suspicion was then the most damning that could be made against any woman. Indeed it is well-nigh impossible for the present generation to visualize the meaning of such an accusation two centuries and a half ago. The belief in man's ability to form unholy partnership with Satan, and through him to take vengeance upon an enemy, was almost universal, even among the learned, and the tenderest hearts were as adamant toward one suspected of such practices.

"Cornet" Parsons had but one recourse, and of that he promptly availed himself. He brought suit against his wife's slanderer. The evidence was typical of such scenes: fatalities among the cattle of Sarah Bridgman's relatives, following a quarrel with Mary Bliss Parsons; the death of a Bridgman child; cries of torture from a little eleven-year-old lame boy who reported that Mary Bliss Parsons had pulled his fractured leg and then departed, followed

by a black mouse. The evidence, however, proved insufficient, despite the pious predisposition of witch-Judges, and the Parsons won a reluctant verdict of "innocent": though the slander was repeated, again and again, with renewed trials and always with the same verdict. The suspicion even extended to Mary Parsons' children, her son, John, being among the later Puritans accused of "familiarity with the devil." But he too was pronounced "innocent," and, in 1692, the delusion finally passed, the Judges refusing to take further notice of such absurd charges.

On the side of her mother, Electra Frary, Lucretia Parsons was descended from John Frairy (later spelled Frary) of Dedham, Massachusetts, who, in 1638, had helped to found the first church of that ancient town. His son, Sampson Frairy, had removed, about 1668, to the site of the later historic town of Deerfield of which he was one of the first two settlers. Escaping the terrible massacres of King Philip's War, he had spent a few years at Hatfield; but about 1689 had returned to desolated Deerfield and built a residence which became an historic landmark. Writing in 1894, Josiah Granville Leach, Vice President of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, declared it "without doubt the oldest house in the Deerfield valley, and one of the oldest in New England."

This house was owned by the Frarys until 1752 when it was sold to a member of the Barnard family whose Christian name does not appear. In 1763, Selah Barnard enlarged it and converted it into a tavern; and there on May 6, 1775, Benedict Arnold, in uniform as yet undisgraced, conducted some of the

operations connected with his intended attack on Ticonderoga.

After the Revolution, the old Frairy House was sold and resold; until it passed, in 1890, into the hands of Miss C. Alice Baker, a descendant of its builder who restored it to its present condition.

Today it stands tenantless, a striking landmark in the long, stately avenue of ancient elms which are the glory of old Deerfield. Thousands of motor cars daily pass its doors, as they follow the broad highway leading to the eastern pleasure grounds of America; and their eager passengers pause to read the date, 1689, carved on its wide, central chimney.

The records seem to indicate that Lucretia Parsons was the commanding personality in the family thus established by the Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton, and the dominating influence in the lives of her children. The keynote of the life of the Rev. Daniel was spiritual influence; that of Lucretia was practical common sense and business ability. He led his flock like a shepherd; she directed her household like the traditional Roman matron, instilling habits of industry, order and obedience. And the combination was one calculated to produce character and business ability.

When the Rev. Daniel O. Morton entered his pastorate at Shoreham, the older New England traditions of the leadership of the clergy had by no means passed. By those traditions, the clergyman was a man of mark in his community. Law and custom gave him dignity and honor. Repeated contempt shown him subjected the offender to a seat, openly, upon a block or stool four feet high, wearing

on his breast the words "An open and obstinate contemner of God's holy ordinances." The clergyman, from his high position as conservator of moral law, was recognized as the leader in all that tended to uphold civil law, maintain order, and preserve the social well-being of the community. Upon the Sabbath, after the people had assembled in the house of worship, an officer waited upon him and escorted him to the pulpit much as the sheriff still escorts the judge to his court. At the close of the service the same ceremony was observed. One said of the preacher after seeing the procession: "He looks like an ambassador of a great king"; and indeed he was.

His function was not, however, merely that of ecclesiastic and law-preserver. He was expected to interest himself in the welfare of his people, in every respect. He saw to it that the schools were conducted with propriety; that the public house was orderly—and there is at least one instance of a Puritan minister who waited outside for a parishioner who had delayed too long in the public house, and soundly thrashed him. He kept an eye on the industry and thrift with which his charges conducted their business; and felt it his especial duty to look after the young, and to administer personal reproof when they fell into error.

A study of the Morton genealogy,[1] reveals the fact that every line of the American ancestry both of the Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton, and of his wife, Lucretia Parsons, came from England. Together they could muster two Mayflower passengers and at least eighty

[1] Published in 1894 by Josiah Granville Leach, then Vice President of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania.

other ancestors who arrived in America before 1650. Hopkins and Mortons, Stetsons and Parsons, Strongs, Clapps and Stebbins, Hiltons, Dickinsons, Fosters, Reyners and Hinsdales, Frarys, Marshfields, Barnards and Sheldons, all were as pure English as could be found in the most English counties of the homeland. Yet, when their second son was born at Shoreham, on May 16, 1824, they called him Levi Parsons, thus honouring the heroic maternal uncle, Levi Parsons, America's first Missionary to Palestine, and perpetuating an old Puritan custom of giving Old Testament Hebrew names to children with no trace of Hebrew blood. In later years, his wife, disliking the name Levi, formed the habit of calling her husband L. P., and he was known as such by all his family and intimate friends. When his only son was born, he was called, not Levi Parsons, but Lewis Parsons, and thus the spell of the pious Puritan custom was broken: but the son for whom it was broken died in infancy.

The household into which came this young Levi, while conservative in theology, and in all matters touching cherished Puritan traditions, such as Sabbath observance, family prayers, games of chance, etc., etc., was singularly progressive in many other respects, as for example the question of alcohol, and the institution of negro slavery. In 1831, the Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton organized Shoreham's first temperance society, into which at its beginning, he managed to gather seven of his own viewpoint, but which, before the end of his pastorate, numbered 500 souls, who had heard from his lips the arguments against alcohol which, in these later days, have

led the United States to so unique a position among nations.

The institution of slavery, then generally accepted without question among religious folk as part of the Creator's scheme of things, he dared to challenge and condemn as man-made, or devil-made, and no part of the Divine plan; and he did not hesitate to declare that, since the National Congress had recognized it as in a sense a national institution, it thereby became also a national crime. To emphasize his belief that negro slaves had souls to save, he set aside a pew, separated from the rest indeed, and entered from the porch of the church, but within the white man's house of God, and known as "negro pew." Here the few slaves of the community were invited to sit each Sabbath and join with their white brothers in worship of the God and Father of us all. Eccentric, perhaps, in a generation whose spiritual vision had not yet perceived the soul that is in every man; but gratefully human, and divinely religious. While it is perhaps unreasonable to censure men for not responding to ideals not commonly acknowledged by their generation, it is certainly reasonable to honor the memories of those with moral sensibilities ahead of their generation.

The village of Shoreham, however, was Puritan in its intolerance, and none too kindly in its outlook upon strange ways, and for that reason eccentric views upon temperance and human slavery were likely to be tolerated only in men of acknowledged leadership. There is extant a quaint story of a French Canadian who sought a night's hospitality in Shoreham, and when the hour of parting came,

ventured to express his gratitude by kissing his hostess's hand. To his astonishment, he found himself promptly facing, not the wilderness trail, but the village jail, where he remained, mystified and bubbling with righteous Gallic indignation, until the local teacher, familiar with the ways of French "outlanders," assured the authorities that, in kissing his hostess's hand, he had but performed the kind of courtesy to which he had been trained.

As a younger son in a family of restricted means, little Levi Parsons had for the nonce to rest content with the education offered by the Shoreham Academy plus the influences of a home environment of culture and refinement. All available funds had been exhausted upon the college and professional training of his elder brother, Daniel O. Morton, Jr., who in time justified his fortune by winning for himself a high place at the bar of Ohio, and his elder sister, Lucretia Parsons, who took her B.A. at Mount Holyoke. But with Levi's secular education went a strict spiritual discipline; for his father put into practice in his family the precepts which he proclaimed to his flock, feeding it the strong doctrines of Calvinism almost with the mother's milk. Levi could speak, with confidence, of "eternal salvation," "eternal damnation," "election," "fore-ordination," and "free grace," before he could tell with certainty the result of seven times seven; and of course with equal ignorance of the philosophical meaning of either. The Puritan method was to teach children the words, "the formulas of grace," leaving the future to illuminate them with their true spiritual significance; and American history can point to many

characters which speak eloquently and convincingly in praise of that method.

In later years, a friend of the Morton family who had frequented the manse at Shoreham, wrote of the Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton: "The true Puritan idea of the relation of the husband and father to the religious wants of the family, was deeply engraven in his heart. With him, a model family would have for its head the husband, the father and the priest, united in the same person, and always presenting the household unto God, morning and evening, as a living sacrifice. . . . Family religion was with him a favorite idea, one that he inculcated often and earnestly—one that he looked upon as the source of the best and happiest influences which one human being can exert upon another."

Thus from his earliest conscious moment, Levi Parsons Morton was brought under influences designed and calculated to mould character. Through the religion which enveloped him as a garment, he learned to value the ways of the spirit, and to place spiritual verities first. Through experience of restricted means, he learned painstaking industry and thrift. Through the gentleness of those around him, he learned that gentleness which throughout his life was so marked a characteristic.

The man who in the morning of life breathes such high moral atmosphere, can never lose the memory of it; and so it was with him. Throughout his long life, L. P. Morton showed in his character the earmarks of the Puritan. "He led a very regular life, rising early and going to bed, when he could, correspondingly early," writes a member of his house-

hold. "He was abstemious in his food and drink. . . . He went to church regularly, and thought it wrong to indulge in games on Sunday. Besides this he took an active interest in the work of the church, and retained to the end of his long life, a simple faith in God."

Nor was the influence of his mother's highly practical philosophy less apparent throughout his life. The enforcement of discipline, in the home of the Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton, had been left to the wife; and to her were due chiefly the habits of thrift, business initiative and untiring labor which led to Mr. Morton's great business successes. To the end of his life, he rejoiced to tell of his father's simple parsonage, a place of "low living and high thinking," and of his mother's stern but kindly discipline. To the combination of the two he always modestly attributed "such success as life has brought." He used to say that "New England was the backbone of the country, that he would not exchange his Puritan ancestors, with their sturdy integrity, their simplicity of life,—the life of the pioneer, the settler,—for any aristocratic lineage in the world."

CHAPTER II

EARLY BUSINESS VENTURES

From Shoreham, in 1832, the Morton family moved to Springfield, Vermont, where the Rev. Daniel Oliver Morton became pastor of the Congregational Church, and his children enjoyed educational advantages superior to those offered at Shoreham. Here Levi attended the district school for five years, having, during part of that period, the advantages of the "Select School," a higher order of institution established through the influence of his father. In 1837, the family left Springfield for Winchendon, Massachusetts, where they remained five years, and where Levi continued his education in the district school. It was here that the boy entered into his first business contract, namely, to relieve the sexton of his father's church of the arduous duty of ringing the bell for services, "for a consideration." "It was," he later explained to inquisitive reporters, "a trifling sum. I do not remember the amount; but I do remember the circumstances distinctly." Here also ended his scholastic education. "I wanted to go to college," he later explained, "but my father was too poor to send me."

His school days over, his business career began, his first employment being, as has been the case with so many eminent Americans, in a country store. Ezra Corey, proprietor of a general store at Enfield, New Hampshire, offered him a chance to learn business, a comfortable life as a member of his own family, and a salary of $50 a year, in return for such miscellaneous services as could be rendered by an active lad of fourteen. Without hesitation, and with the feeling of one beginning his career, Morton, with his father's full approval, repaired to Enfield and began his duties. "I was obliged," he wrote, reminiscently, in later years, "to do a good deal of what might be termed 'manual labor,' exerting my physical powers almost constantly, for holidays were practically unknown, and consequently, unthought of."

There was, however, much to be learned even in Enfield; and Morton eagerly watched, in this tiny business test-tube, the working of the machine which men call business. The bookkeeper's art, the calculations of profit and loss, the far-flung sources of supply, the probable demands for each commodity, all mysteries at first, soon became familiar to his inquiring mind.

At the end of his second year, satisfied that he had learned what Mr. Corey could teach him, he determined to find a larger field. The ceaseless routine required at Enfield, however, made the search difficult; and he decided to take some temporary employment which would offer a larger measure of free time. As a result, despite his apparent lack of adequate preparation, he soon found himself ensconced in a one-room brick school house at Bosca-

wen, New Hampshire, where for one interminable year, he taught very rudimentary facts to reluctant minds and imposed discipline upon wriggling bodies and rebellious spirits, searching, meanwhile, for a business opening. It was found at last, a clerkship in the general store of W. W. Estabrook, of Concord, New Hampshire.

His salary was now $200 a year, with the privilege customary in New England, of living as a member of his employer's own family. This salary, which today seems so pathetically small, was then by no means insignificant. On April 28, 1842, his brother Daniel, nine years his senior, with the liberty always allowed to the elder brother, thus admonished him upon this point from his home in Ohio: "The true secret of success in life is to stick fast to your line of business and never allow yourself to wander from it for any other, no matter how much more lucrative or pleasant it may appear to be. Be steadfast in the pursuit of one object and you will be sure to obtain it.

"You say you get two hundred dollars for your salary this year. You say you hope to save 'a little' this year. Now, you must not talk in this way. You can save a great deal out of $200. If you get $200 this year and $250 next year, with proper economy, you can lay up out of these two years enough to pay all the necessary expenses of two years' schooling. But it will not be necessary for you to pay out much for schooling if you have power of mind enough to apply yourself to books in your leisure moments. *You can educate yourself*, and a self-taught man is worth two of your college boys. . . . But if your leisure moments are not

sufficient, and I think by all means they are, we have schools in Ohio where young men can do work enough to pay their own way through college. If you are bent upon having a college education, you can get it yourself, independent of the assistance of anyone."

Whether moved by this advice or not, the younger brother did not seek formal entrance into college life; but the following year brought changes which threw him into intimate contact with one of America's historic colleges, Dartmouth, alma mater of Daniel Webster and Rufus Choate. Estabrook, facing certain failure at Concord, decided to open a branch in Hanover, New Hampshire, and selected Morton as its manager. It was designed to be a sort of double-barreled business. Morton was to take a stock of manufactured goods to Hanover, exchange them there for country products, and send these products to Concord by wagon, as Hanover had no railway connections.

For a youth of nineteen, this was an interesting task; but its setting made it doubly so, for it offered social contacts of unusual interest, and opportunities for exactly the type of self-culture to which his brother had referred.

In 1818, in his famous argument of the Dartmouth College case, Daniel Webster had said: "It is a small college, and yet there are those that love it." Mr. Morton, however, found it no longer small, as compared with its leading rivals. In 1842 it had graduated 85 men, as compared with 105 from Yale, 55 from Harvard, and 45 from Princeton. It was, furthermore, a turbulent college, and not the less

interesting for that fact. John King Lord, in his history of the institution, says of the period: "Few of the students came from families of wealth; most of them were either wholly or in part self-supporting and they often gave expression to their independence by smothered or open revolt against college regulations. Almost their only lawful amusement, (theatres, cards, pool, dancing and similar social amusements being still under ban), were training in the 'Phalanx,' (the students' military organization which was disbanded in 1845 owing to its convivial tendencies), and kicking football on the Common, which, during the winter, was impossible." "Under such a condition," he continues, "the spirit of mischief found expression in uncharted ways. . . . The faculty was constantly on the watch to check disorder, and the students were as constantly devising some new forms of roguery."

In 1843, in view of the inadequacy of endowment and the smallness of salaries, and also in view of the theory of education, it was the custom for the Professors of Dartmouth College to open their homes to student boarders, and Mr. Morton was fortunate enough to secure such an arrangement for himself. He thus became a member of the household of Professor Edwin David Sanborn, Professor of Latin, since 1836, and a scholar of repute. Professor Sanborn's wife was the daughter of Ezekiel Webster, Daniel Webster's elder brother, and his house was a social centre of academic Hanover. It was here that Mr. Morton first met Miss Lucy Young Kimball, who thirteen years later became his wife.

"Dr. Sanborn," writes John King Lord, "had a

forceful nature, that carried the enthusiasm of a boy into whatever pleased and interested him as a man, great powers of acquisition, a capacious and retentive memory, ready humor and the ability to command and express in entertaining form his knowledge. His mode of thought, in which the impulsive outweighed the critical, was discursive, and he gave frank expression to his feelings, but rarely with offence. He never shrank from any task that he felt was his duty or spared himself in its execution."

He was frank in his detestation of cant and hypocrisy, and often denounced it with surprising frankness, to the consternation of his less human colleagues. Upon one occasion, he interrupted a prayer meeting, whose subject was "growing in grace," with the astonishing declaration: "I don't know much about this growing in grace. I don't see that I have grown in grace in the last ten years, and I don't see that any of you have either."

In the College, and in the town of Hanover, Professor Sanborn was a factor of importance, and the affection of his students was lasting. While not, in the technical sense one of his students, Mr. Morton gained from intimate contact with him much of the inspiration which the students derived through the ordinary channels of college life, and his gratitude was lasting. In 1881, while Minister to France, he took an active part in the work of raising a pension fund to be devoted to the comfort of this old friend whom age and an incurable disease had rendered incapable of further academic service.

But interesting as were these college and social

connections, Mr. Morton's business was always his chief interest. "I was happiest," he said in later years, "when I was working hardest; when I was learning how to accomplish things; when I was building up my business." His own successes at Hanover, however, were accompanied by the failure of his chief at Concord; and within a year the creditors of W. W. Estabrook closed up the business, the chief creditor, James M. Beebe, a prominent Boston merchant, coming in person to Concord to look into the affair. Having extended his investigations to the Hanover branch also, Mr. Beebe here found a condition of unexpected prosperity. Morton had done his work so well that there appeared no reason for the Hanover branch to go down with the Concord house. Accordingly, at Mr. Beebe's suggestion, the business there was continued, with Mr. Morton as its manager. Within a year, he had bought out the Beebe interest, and, at twenty-one, was an independent, and singularly successful merchant.

So far, Mr. Morton had followed his brother's advice, and had prospered, both in business, and in the development of those intellectual interests which colleges exist to foster. It has been said that there is a business sense which is something quite apart from ordinary intellectual processes, and Mr. Morton, now master of his own methods, at once gave evidence of its possession. He enlarged his activities so boldly and so rapidly as to alarm his cautious father, who wrote: "We are not without our fears that you may undertake too much business. You have now a great business on hand, and if you can manage it honorably and successfully, you will certainly deserve credit. I

hope you will avoid speculations and purchases which involve much risk; it cannot be necessary."

This "safety first" advice Levi took leave to disregard, boldly enlarging his business as opportunity offered, and as boldly creating opportunity. He drew trade from Vermont by the ingenious method of offering to pay the toll of customers from that State, and widened his range of customers from Hanover by similar simple but catching devices. In Hanover, he was the pioneer of modern business advertising methods: but he was cautious and far-sighted, and, without sacrifice of the essential principles urged by his father, he rapidly pushed on to larger possibilities.

With the counsel of his father, given later in the same letter, he was in complete and permanent accord, not only during his remaining days in Hanover, but throughout life. "Business," wrote that Reverend idealist, "to be successful must have a constant and faithful overseer. . . . You are the overseer of your own business. Too many clerks eat up the profits, and people prefer to trade with the principal, if possible, rather than with clerks. Honesty is the best policy. Always do right. Most important of all, remember that God's eye is ever upon us, and that we must give account to Him for all the deeds done in the body."

By degrees, and by virtue of that boldness which his father feared no less than by honesty and sound business methods which his father urged, he raised his business to the rank of first place in the region, the sales amounting to the surprising sum of $100,000 a year.

L. P. MORTON AT THE AGE OF 24

Business success was of course followed by a certain conceded leadership in other lines; and he took his political responsibilities as seriously as he took those of his private business. No man in Hanover was a more ardent Whig than he, although participation in politics as an office-seeker was no part of his plan. In the Presidential campaign of 1848, he worked ardently for the election of Zachary Taylor, and the local politicians gladly recognized his services. *The True Democrat*, in commenting upon the way in which Hanover accepted the news of Taylor's election, said: "On the twenty-third of November, 1848, there was a rousing Whig ratification and jollification over the election of General Taylor, and a grand dinner at Dartmouth Hotel, at which Daniel Blaisdell presided, and Levi P. Morton and Col. T. D. Smith acted as toastmasters, two being necessary by [reason of] the extraordinary number of 21 regular and several volunteer toasts. The festivities were ushered in with a salute of 50 guns."

But even such success did not satisfy Mr. Morton's ambition. Having won in one field, he was already lifting his eyes to a larger. In recognition of his work at Hanover, the firm, James M. Beebe & Co. of Boston, had made him an offer, and in 1849 he abandoned Hanover for Boston, where he trained his ripening talents upon the problems of a great city business.

Fortunately we have one of his letters, written to his brother, Daniel, soon after he arrived at his new post. It is a frank, straightforward estimate of his own achievements and prospects, and a summary of this early period of his life:

Revere House, Jan. 28, 1849.

Dear Brother Daniel:

You will see by the date of this letter that I am at the "Revere," where we spent a day or two very pleasantly, a year and a half ago. I have taken up my residence in Boston, but shall remain at this house only a short time. I intend to go to some private boarding house, as soon as I can find the right location.

I could have lived quite as pleasantly at Hanover, and had I not been ambitious, I should have remained there, as I was pleasantly situated,—had many strong friends and withal a good business.

My life here will be very laborious—the business is so very large that it makes it necessary for the partners and many of the young men to be at the store until 10, 11 & 12 o'c. at night. This is probably the largest Importing House in the United States —and by *far* the largest Importing and Jobbing House in Boston—the business is immense and very safe. You recommended my coming here very strongly, and I thought that another like opportunity might not occur during my life? Still I do not like, for money and high reputation, to make a perfect *slave* of myself—I am in hopes and Mr. Beebe is also, that after business is arranged there will be less night work.

We have about 30 men in all (including men, boys and porters). The sales the last two years have been about *two millions*—one year a little over, the other a little less.

I enclose a card—you can refer to our House if you wish.

I have made at Hanover, (if I make no losses in collections for sale of stock, etc.) from $12000 to $13000. . . .

I wish you to write me very often—There is no danger from the temptations that you speak of, as I have, I think & *know*, decision of character enough to resist all city temptations, and besides, they have no *charms* for me. . . .

Very affectionately,

Your Brother

Levi P. Morton.

In this frank account of his new opportunities and past achievements, Mr. Morton did not exaggerate, but stated the facts quite fairly. The Boston market showed rising trade, both foreign and domestic. Her import statistics show an increase from $14,000,000 in 1840 to $28,659,733 in 1850, and by 1857 they reached $44,840,043. "At no time," says the *Memorial History of Boston*, "have there been so many importing and jobbing houses in Boston as between the years 1840 and 1857." Her coastwise shipping trade, especially in Southern cotton, was also enormous: and, in return, she supplied her Southern customers with domestic dry goods, boots and shoes, furniture and wooden wares. "The tonnage owned in Boston in 1855," continues the *Memorial History*, "was larger than ever before or since, 541,644 tons," and the historian, Justin Winsor, ranks James M. Beebe among the men "most active in these efforts . . . to whom the present generation . . . owes much more than it is aware."

It is safe to say that few men owed to Mr. Beebe's personal influence so much as did Mr. Morton. Aside from the natural interest always elicited by the man who plucks success from failure, there was, in Mr. Morton's career, a striking reminder of Mr. Beebe's own. The latter's father, Levi Beebe, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, had been a farmer of small means, whose children had received only a common school education. At the age of sixteen, James M. Beebe had gone to Boston as an under-clerk in the dry-goods store of John Hathaway, then one of Boston's most famous shops. Three years later, he had been given the management of a branch store, at exactly the age at which Mr. Morton had been sent to establish a branch of Estabrook's at Hanover. At twenty-one, Mr. Beebe had become head of his own business, a retail dry-goods store, on Hanover Street, the age again exactly corresponding with that at which Mr. Morton had bought out the Beebe interests at Hanover. With clear business foresight, he had changed from retail to exclusively wholesale business, and had speedily advanced to a position of undisputed leadership.

When Mr. Morton began his work with the firm, in 1849, it was at the height of its success. Its business was so large that it was preparing to move into a large granite building on Kilby Street, and with that move, effected in 1851, came an enlargement of the firm. Mr. Morton was admitted to a junior partnership, and Junius Spencer Morgan, of Hartford, Connecticut, was given a partnership the importance of which was recognized by changing

the Company's name from James M. Beebe & Co., to J. M. Beebe, Morgan & Co.

Mr. Morgan's ancestors, like those of Mr. Morton, had been among the builders of early New England. Miles Morgan, a direct ancestor, had come to Massachusetts in 1636; while his own father, Joseph Morgan, a Revolutionary soldier, had made a moderate fortune in connection with the Ætna Fire Insurance Company, at Hartford, Connecticut. A part of this fortune came into the Beebe Company with Mr. Morgan: but his personality and experience were of more importance than his money. His first business experience had been gained as clerk in the banking house of Morris Ketcham; but, after a few years, he had accepted a junior partnership in the firm of Howe, Mather & Co., of Hartford. There he had married Juliet Pierpont, daughter of a well-known minister, and they brought with them to Boston a son, then thirteen years of age, later the world-famous J. Pierpont Morgan. With the coming into the firm of Mr. Morgan, began a friendship, between Mr. Morton and the Morgan family, which lasted over fifty years.

With these changes came a still further expansion of the business of J. M. Beebe, Morgan & Co. Its cotton trade soon became so great that George Fabyan, its cotton buyer, received a salary of $20,000 a year, a salary sensational for that generation. With such changes came also wider interests for Mr. Morton. To Mr. Beebe's important business connections, which extended to railroad building as well as trade, were now added those of Mr. Morgan, which touched banking and insurance; and

the atmosphere rapidly served to change Mr. Morton's hitherto provincial outlook into an interest which was nation-wide.

Then came, in 1851, a still more stimulating experience, when Mr. Beebe decided that the interests of the Company demanded a careful, first-hand survey of the conditions of the European market, and selected Mr. Morton as his companion for the expedition. A trip to Europe, in those days, was by no means the ordinary incident which it now is: and for Mr. Morton such a trip under the personal direction of a man of Mr. Beebe's insight and business connections, was an experience of prime importance, enabling him to see a business horizon quite beyond the range of his native land.

Immediately after his return from Europe, Mr. Morton received a summons to Bristol, where his father lay on his death bed, and he fortunately arrived before the end, which came on March 25, 1852. From the day when he left the roof of Justin Parsons at Pittsfield, the life of the Rev. Daniel O. Morton had been a benediction. During thirty-eight years of active service, wrote a contemporary, "he never, in any place, forgot that he was a minister of Jesus Christ."

The busy offices of J. M. Beebe, Morgan & Co. seemed strangely worldly after Mr. Morton's return from Bristol; but he threw himself unreservedly into his work, and by degrees the things of life readjusted themselves. His longing for a larger sphere of action was increased when Mr. Junius Spencer Morgan, heeding the same call, left the firm of J. M. Beebe, Morgan & Co., in 1854, to become a partner

in the banking house of George Peabody & Co. of London, and began the process of making it into one of the greatest of international banking establishments, later known as J. S. Morgan & Co.

With a friend so active in this vast field, international banking took on a new interest for Mr. Morton. But there were yet several stages to be passed before it became possible for him to enter it. James M. Beebe, soon after Mr. Morgan's departure, decided that a branch house in New York City was demanded by the expansion of the firm's business, and, in 1854, he suggested that Mr. Morton should move to New York and take charge of its establishment and conduct. Mr. Morton accepted with alacrity, and went to New York where he established offices on Broadway, opposite Exchange Place.

Almost at once, however, came an offer which tempted him away from James M. Beebe & Co. The head of the important firm of George Bird & Co., a house which held in New York a position corresponding to that of James M. Beebe in Boston, wished to retire from business, but to have his company continue. He had been searching for a new head who could be trusted to continue it with success, and who would take as partners his two nephews, F. B. and W. F. Grinnell. He now approached Mr. Morton with the suggestion that he undertake the task. The offer was accepted and on January 1, 1855, Mr. Morton began his life as head of "Morton, Grinnell & Co., Wholesale Dry Goods, Commission." His capital, as his own personal memoranda tell us, was $100,000; and his

methods were those which his experience at Enfield, Concord, Hanover and Boston had taught him. Every employee was required to follow a routine as rigid as that which Mr. Morton imposed upon himself. Work, according to his philosophy of life, is the object of life, and slackness akin to sin. There were sympathy, and promotion, for those who did their duty; but short shrift for the slacker. While conscious of the fact that accuracy, regularity and precision would be rigorously exacted, each clerk was soon conscious also, that given these things, he would be treated with as much courtesy and consideration as the most important of the clients.

Each day as soon as the machinery of the establishment was in full operation, Mr. Morton would answer his letters, by hand, as the day of stenographers and typewriters was not yet. But there was always time for the courteous reception of such strangers or acquaintances as appeared, and each retired after his interview with the consciousness that he had been treated with consideration, whatever the outcome of his mission. Already Mr. Morton had developed the quality, so valuable in the larger affairs of later life, of making friends, even through the medium of business routine.

Full of work as were his days, however, Mr. Morton still found time for social life, and soon renewed his acquaintanceship with Miss Lucy Young Kimball, whom he had known in his Hanover days. On October 15, 1856, they were married at the bride's home at Flatbush, Long Island. While not wealthy as New York counted wealth even in those days, the bride's father, Elijah Huntington Kimball, was a man

of high position and influence, and her mother, formerly Miss Sarah Wetmore, belonged to a family which had helped to settle Connecticut, and had held high social position throughout all the succeeding generations, in Connecticut, in Rhode Island, in New York. Mrs. Morton, in addition to the social experience offered at home, had spent some time abroad, while her uncle, Mr. C. B. Haddock, was American Minister to Portugal. This glimpse of public life had given her a desire to see her husband's evident talents lead him toward politics. "Early in their married life," says a brief manuscript memorial concerning her, "she laughingly predicted a notable public career for him."

But Mr. Morton showed no similar ambition. All of his energies were given to business, and, as his most important clientele came from the Southern states, the impending conflict was now beginning to alarm him and his business associates.

Keenly alive to the trend of political forces, he made such adjustments as the interests of the Company, and the demands of staunch patriotism, always Federal, made possible: but as sectional hostilities ripened into war, he, like so many other men of affairs, North and South, saw financial ruin impending. His first consideration, however, was the safety of the nation, threatened with dissolution. Among the members of his staff, wrote one of his clerks, "there were a number of young men who belonged to the militia regiments, and who immediately after the attack on Fort Sumter responded to the call for ninety days' service. All these gentlemen, myself among the number, took their places in the ranks,

and their places were reserved for them while they were absent, and their pay continued throughout the period."

As the woes of civil war increased, the firm of Morton, Grinnell & Co., found it increasingly difficult, and at last impossible, to collect the money due them from Southern customers, although still fulfilling obligations to their own creditors. Soon it was evident that there was but one way out—bankruptcy; and therefore, in May, 1861, the house suspended business, the resources enabling the payment of fifty per cent. to its creditors.

For a firm whose chief connection had been with the South, the resumption of business after failure was difficult: but Mr. Morton soon achieved it. Before the end of the year, 1861, Morton, Grinnell & Co. was again prospering, although Mr. Morton had already seen, in sound banking, possibilities which offered larger gains and a more certain future than could be expected from the restored commercial company. He, however, bided his time, watching the markets, studying the problems of banking, and searching for possible partners who could bring to the projected banking enterprise such elements as he himself could not furnish. In the meantime, he faced his immediate problem of covering his recent failure by indisputable success. This much he owed to the trust which had been reposed in him. There was apparent no disposition to regard his failure as discreditable. His friends and business associates had from the first classed it among the casualties of war. Mr. Jay had generously lent his country house at Katonah as the Mortons'

place of residence during the first difficult period of readjustment. Others had constantly reminded him that one or more failures generally mark the pathway of every man of business, often preceding great subsequent successes; but he knew the psychology of trust upon which all sound business must rest, and resolutely stuck to his post as head of the reorganized Morton, Grinnell & Co. until in 1863 he considered its character fully reestablished, and his new plan for the establishment of a banking house fully matured. Then he launched his new venture.

CHAPTER III

AN INTERNATIONAL BANKER

To the casual observer the year, 1863, appeared to offer few temptations to a man contemplating a venture into the field of banking, especially when the adventurer's previous business successes had depended chiefly upon the cotton production of the Southern states. On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln had declared that on the following New Year's Day, in all states which had not by that time returned to their allegiance to the Federal Union, the slaves should become forever free. Not one of the seceded states had heeded this warning, and in consequence the economic machinery of "King Cotton" had been hopelessly shattered. The Federal blockade, furthermore, had practically stopped the Southern export of cotton. In 1860, this had amounted to $202,741,351; in 1861, it had dropped to about $42,000,000; in 1862 only about $4,000,000 worth had been sent out. The Emancipation Proclamation, by linking Federal success with human liberty, had destroyed the South's lingering hope of British intervention in her behalf, and made it certain that the blockade would hold, and that the export of cotton would drop still lower.

Nearly all other business in the Southern states had depended upon cotton, and in consequence visions of financial ruin haunted every Southern merchant.

In the North, the cost of maintenance for the Federal Armies and Navy, had risen from $1,000,000 per day at the beginning of the war, to about $3,000,000 per day in 1863, and to meet this demand the duties and other taxes which hamper business had been enormously increased. With the Legal Tender Act of 1862, "greenbacks," inconvertible paper money, had come like a deluge. Gresham's Law had operated to drive real money out of circulation, and the greenback dollar had started on its inevitable downward course. In 1862, it had been voluntarily accepted as the equivalent of ninety-eight cents, gold; but in 1863 it stood at only about seventy-five cents, with obvious tendency toward a much lower level. Each Federal victory reported, sent it up; each Confederate success forced it down until, in July, 1863, it reached its nadir, thirty-five cents to the dollar.

With a violently fluctuating currency, credits are difficult and the risks to lenders abnormally great. Banking under such conditions is a hazardous business; but, as Mr. Morton saw clearly, the hazard of loss is also the hazard of gain, and he therefore decided that the time was ripe for the realization of his long-deferred project. "In 1863," says his *Personal Memorandum*, "I commenced a banking business at 30 Wall Street, with Mr. Walter H. Burns and H. Cruger Oakley as partners."

Business came with gratifying promptness. International exchanges soon furnished a rich harvest

of profits, Mr. Morton's intimacy with his former partner, Mr. Junius Spencer Morgan, giving him advantages on the European side and Mr. Burns' connections, as Mr. Morgan's son-in-law, strengthening them. But his chief banking assets were a reputation for fair dealing which was never questioned, and his "knack of getting good men," as Governor Charles H. Allen expresses it, "to whom he gave, always, absolute loyalty."

Thus L. P. Morton & Co., new though it was, prospered amazingly; and the end of the war found it not alone solvent, but highly successful.

This prosperity, however, did not cause Mr. Morton to forget that there were men who had lost through the failure of Morton, Grinnell & Co. These men had now no legal claim upon him; for each had given him full and final release upon the basis of fifty per cent, then the full measure of his ability to pay. But his conscience recognized a moral claim. He therefore summoned them all to a banquet, the purpose of which was unannounced. As they took their places at the table, however, each found beneath his plate a check for the total amount of his losses, with interest to date. The sum thus disposed of was large; but it was small when compared with the satisfaction felt by Mr. Morton's Puritan soul, as his guests filed out, each eloquent in praise of the honorable generosity of the man who had paid beyond the demands either of laws or of legal obligations. "I notice with pleasure . . ." wrote a New York correspondent on May 19, 1868, "that Levi P. Morton, Esq., one of the most prominent and respected bankers of this city and London, is

now engaged in the rare work of paying off liabilities that were incurred years ago when he was a member of a dry goods firm here, notwithstanding these liabilities were, at the time, settled for a given sum by the creditors of the firm and Mr. Morton held their receipts in full. But Mr. Morton was not the man to rest satisfied with this partial payment. What he owed to those who had credited him was an even dollar; and, though at the time his house was dragged down in the storm that swamped so many, and he could not pay dollar for dollar, he has seen the day since, in his successful business of banker, that he could thus pay them, and that payment is now being made. Surely such an instance of mercantile honor and fidelity is worthy of warm praise, while the example is one that all who are similarly situated might imitate with the liveliest satisfaction and lasting profit."

To a letter of congratulation, accompanying a gift of a handsome silver service from his grateful creditors, Mr. Morton replied: "I have done nothing to deserve such acknowledgment."

Meanwhile, the English connections of L. P. Morton & Co. had led to the establishment of a London branch, known as Morton, Burns & Co., to handle the increasing business on that side of the ocean; and in 1869 the retirement of Mr. Oakley, made it possible to enlarge the capital and make new connections by the choice of a partner to succeed him. The choice was a fortunate one, for George Bliss who was selected brought into the business $2,500,000 of new capital, and a mind of unusual power. The firm's name now became Morton, Bliss & Co.

George Bliss was born in Northampton, Mass., in 1816 of Puritan stock. His first business was with Mr. Harvey Sanford in New Haven. At twenty-one, he was taken into partnership and the firm became Sanford and Bliss. He went to New York in 1844 and joined John Jay Phelps and S. B. Crittenden in export trade under the name of Phelps, Crittenden and Bliss, later George Bliss and Co. In 1862 he laid the foundation of his fortune by fostering the advance in the currency price of all merchandise and buying all the goods he could lay his hands on. In 1869 he went into the banking business with Mr. Morton.

The time for expansion was well chosen, and the opportunities for combining big business with important public service were never greater. In 1868, the State of Georgia had repudiated her debt, and pessimistic prophets predicted that the United States, sooner or later, would follow her example. Mr. Morton, however, felt certain that the Union debt would be paid in full, declared the greenback as good as gold, and acted upon his faith, a course requiring courage in view of the fact that the national debt totalled over two billion, seven hundred million dollars.

In November, 1868, General Grant was elected President upon a platform denouncing repudiation, and one of his first actions as Chief Executive was to sign the Public Credit Act of March 18, 1869, which pledged the faith of the nation to the policy of paying Federal interest-bearing bonds in coin, and to the speedy resumption of specie payments.

During the following summer, the President and Mrs. Grant paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Morton, at

their summer home at Newport. In a volume entitled *Recollections of a Happy Life*, Mrs. Elizabeth Christopher Hobson, records the following incidents of the visit: "There was to be a large dinner in the evening of their arrival, and their luggage did not come. My sister (Mrs. Morton) dressed Mrs. Grant in one of her Worth gowns, the French maid arranged her hair, and such was the transformation that the President exclaimed: 'Why, mother, is that you? I don't know you.'" "It was during this visit," adds Mrs. Hobson, that the project of Mr. Morton's entrance into public life crystalized, and he became one of General Grant's strong supporters."

But Mr. Morton was not yet ready to begin a political career, and any dawning ambition for political distinction was shortly checked by the death of his wife at Fairlawn, Newport, on July 11, 1871. The *Church Journal* of July 26, 1871, in sounding the keynote of her life unconsciously suggested the character of her monument. It said: "She offered herself freely for service among the poor, and her ready intelligence was ever devising new methods of benefitting them. St. Barnabas House, the Woman's Hospital, . . . the Industrial School of Grace Parish were only some of the many channels through which, secretly and almost by stealth, . . . her generous bounty flowed. Now, at last, her deeds are known and her works do follow her."

Soon after this article appeared came the announcement that Mr. Morton had donated $72,500 for the erection of a building in connection with Grace Church, planned on the model of the French crèche. The deed of gift declares that the building is "to be

known during the lifetime of the party of the first part as 'Grace Memorial House,' and afterwards, according to the terms of the acceptance of said gift by the party of the second part, as 'The Morton Memorial House of Grace Church.'"

But at forty-seven the love of life is strong even in the face of such a loss as he had suffered; and soon the absorbing interests of his rapidly expanding business again engrossed him. On both sides of the Atlantic new opportunities were opening. The termination of the Franco-Prussian war had given extraordinary advantages to the London House of Morgan. The French loan brought it into the first rank in international banking. Similar chances were open to his own London branch, L. P. Morton, Burns & Co., but there was needed a new directing personality resident in London. This need was soon admirably met by Sir John Rose, an eminent financier who had lately occupied the high post of Minister of Finance in Canada. In recognition of the importance of his acceptance of the post, the name of the London branch was changed, in 1869, to Morton, Rose & Co.

The results at once appeared upon the Morton balance sheets, which showed surprising gains. "With exchanges after the Civil War, and great cotton shipments to be covered," writes one of Sir John Rose's associates, Mr. Ernest Chaplin, of London, "the profits were handsome."

But, spectacular as had been the progress of these two banking establishments of Junius Spencer Morgan and L. P. Morton, they were now surpassed by the remarkable achievements of the son of Junius

Spencer Morgan, John Pierpont, who as a youth had left Boston in 1854, when his father retired from partnership with James M. Beebe. After a brilliant course at the University of Göttingen, in Germany, J. Pierpont Morgan had settled in New York, and in 1857 had entered the banking house of Duncan, Sherman & Co. Three years later, he had become American agent for George Peabody & Co., and in 1864, a partner in the firm of Dabney, Morgan & Co. Finally, in 1871, he was made partner in Drexel, Morgan & Co., which later became J. P. Morgan & Co.

At that time, Jay Cooke, of Philadelphia, was the recognized medium of the Federal Government in its dealing with banks and the bankers' clientele. During the Civil War as a result of his successful management of the seven thirty bonds, he had become the power behind the Government, and had come to regard his position as beyond challenge. The Refunding Act, passed by Congress on July 7, 1870, with a view to the reduction of interest on the bonds representing the $500,000,000 borrowed to finance the war, however, soon led to a demonstration of the fact that his day of unrivalled leadership was over. The Treasury Department availed itself of the power allowed by the Act to dispose of only $200,000,000 at first, leaving the remaining $300,000,000 to be floated at a later date. Jay Cooke assumed that the task of disposing of the issue would naturally fall to him, and decided to dispose of a considerable portion of it in Europe, through the agency of his London house, Jay Cooke, McCulloch & Co. But when the time came for selecting the agents, Cooke

found Mr. Morton, Mr. Morgan, and Sir John Rose bidding against him at Washington.

The late Gaillard Hunt, long connected with the Department of State, and a keen student of international affairs, has left in manuscript the following interesting account of the contest and its ultimate outcome: "At first, the Secretary announced that the agents in London would be Cooke's house, Morton, Rose & Co., the Barings, the Morgans and the Rothschilds, but later many other banks were added, for which reason the Barings and the Rothschilds withdrew. Sir John Rose was then authorized to advertise the sale in Europe, which enraged Cooke and his friends. There were thus discordant elements in the agency, and lack of hearty coöperation when the loan was started, and it soon showed signs of collapse. Mr. Morton then proposed a scheme for forming a pool to take the whole balance of the two hundred millions, but the Government would not consent. Morton then regarded the effort to float the loan as doomed to failure and in this view his partner, Bliss, concurred. A fresh start was made by the Treasury Department, however, and Cooke was put in charge. He organized the European and American Associated Banks: but Morton, Rose & Co., and Morton, Bliss & Co. declined participation.

"Cooke was now the guiding spirit of the transaction and by brilliant advertising and exploitation he succeeded in carrying the loan through with triumph. The first person to admit that he had triumphed and that his own apprehensions had been mistaken, was Morton. He saw the President, General Grant, expressed regret that he had not

participated in the loan, and generously praised the success of his rival. 'There is,' he said, 'no wiping out the fact that it was a wonderful negotiation and will put Jay Cooke & Co. head and shoulders above any American house in Europe, and make them the peers of the proudest of the European houses.'

"In the course of the following year, the Treasury Department took up the matter of selling the remainder of the '5.20's,' some $300,000,000. In view of his success in selling $200,000,000 of the bonds, Cooke thought he was entitled to sell the rest, and was indignant when Morton and 'young Morgan' appeared as rival claimants for the loan. 'Young Morgan' was John Pierpont Morgan, the son of Morton's old friend and partner Junius S. Morgan.

"In Washington and elsewhere there had arisen a strong opposition to Cooke's ascendancy in the Government's financial transactions, which partook of the nature of monopoly. It aroused antagonism also because of the enormous profits Cooke was supposed to have made, and was criticised as putting the financial transaction of the Government into the control of one man, a private citizen, working not alone for the Government, but for his own profit as well.

"The contest soon became a battle royal between the veteran banker Jay Cooke and Levi P. Morton, the one already a dominating personality, the other new to Washington officialdom. How vigorously Cooke fought to retain his leadership is shown by the daily letters he exchanged with his agents in Washington, which are printed in Dr. Oberholtzer's

excellent *Life of Jay Cooke.* By what arguments or methods Morton overcame him we have no record, but we know the result of the contest. Jay Cooke was routed, and Morton controlled the loan. Instead of being the inviter, Cooke found himself the invited. He was asked if he would join the Morton group, and accepted.

"The three hundred millions were divided equally among Morton, Bliss & Co., Jay Cooke & Co., and Drexel, Morgan & Co., and the contract for the sale of the bonds was signed. The English principals were Jay Cooke, McCulloch & Co., N. M. Rothschild & Sons, Baring Bros., J. S. Morgan & Co., and Morton, Rose & Co.

"The affair was managed in New York by Morton, Morgan and H. C. Fahnestock who acted for Cooke. Books for the subscriptions to the loan were opened simultaneously in New York and London on February 4, 1873, to close on February 7, but by that date only thirteen and a half millions had been subscribed in this country and a few millions in London. Further subscriptions were allowed and when the transaction closed, Europe had subscribed twenty-eight and one-half millions and the United States twenty-one millions.

"When it appeared at the beginning of the sale that there was opposition to the loan, Cooke proposed that the other banks should drop out and leave the matter in his hands, as he was confident that he could restore confidence. To this Morton and Morgan would not agree.

"The whole transaction was carried through with rapidity, and, in April, 1873, Senator Cattell, of

Pennsylvania, left for London carrying with him some nineteen million dollars of bonds for the European subscribers; but to Cooke's chagrin he deposited them, not at the office of Jay Cooke, McCulloch & Co., but in Rothschild's bank.

"The power of Cooke was broken. His energies were no longer directed in Government quarters, but soon were absorbed by the Northern Pacific Railway, and the failure of the Road in September, 1873, brought on a panic. There was another 'Black Friday' and Cooke disappeared from the world of finance.

"Although Morton had succeeded in rivalry with Cooke and had displaced him, his ill-success in disposing of the bonds had been disappointing. The Government had full confidence in Morton, however, which was shown by the fact that in 1873, Morton, Rose & Co. were chosen as the fiscal agents of the United States in London, an assignment which they held until 1884, when a change in the politics of the administration brought a transfer to another bank. But when the Republicans came into power again in 1889, Morton, Rose & Co. were called upon to resume their government agency.

"This agency added greatly to the prestige of the house. The fact that they occupied an official relationship recommended them to Americans in Europe who needed banking facilities and to Europeans for American transactions. All government funds collected in Europe—consular fees and other sources of revenue paid abroad—were deposited with them, and all drafts for salaries and other expenses of foreign missions were made upon the home govern-

ment through them. The agency terminated in 1893 when again the political complexion of the administration changed."

This contest served to emphasize the fact that reconstruction finance must henceforth take account of new banking forces, among which must be reckoned as first, the genius of J. Pierpont Morgan; and among the allies available for his purposes were the Morton banks.

Another incident of the same period served to show the growing power of the Morton interests, and of Mr. Morton's personal influence with the Federal Government. This was the settlement of the *Alabama* claims, the most important problem of diplomacy left as the result of America's Civil War, and the most important political event of Grant's administration. It had long been America's claim that the damages wrought by the *Alabama*, and other vessels built for the South, in British ports, and allowed to "escape" to sea, and to act as raiders, were proper charges upon the British government. These claims had, however, been studiously disregarded by Great Britain, her attitude being that expressed by Lord John Russell in the words: "Her Majesty's Government must . . . decline either to make reparation and compensation for the captures made by the *Alabama*, or to refer the question to any foreign state." In 1869, Senator Charles Sumner, then Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, had widened the breach by rehearsing the tale of British unfriendliness to the United States during the Civil War, and declaring that the losses of private property therefrom resulting, might total

$15,000,000 while the indirect losses might reach many hundreds of millions.

Hamilton Fish, Grant's Secretary of State, had, however, set himself the task of overcoming the evil effects of Sumner's outbreak, and of bringing the two nations to a point of agreement upon the *Alabama* question, and had found the Gladstone cabinet in full sympathy with his aims. Their task had, however, been rendered extremely delicate by the extravagant contention of Sumner and any sign of concession was, under the existing conditions, now likely to work the overthrow of the British Cabinet. In America, also, as Fish soon discovered, Sumner's speech had so keyed up popular opinion that any suggestion of concessions by the Government was almost equally dangerous. For these reasons, almost two years of secret and often unofficial negotiation were necessary before a plan was devised which both Governments could venture openly to advocate. Under these conditions a great banking house, with offices and large business interests upon both sides of the Atlantic, was in a position of great potential influence, provided proper care and discretion were exercised.

In January, 1871, Sir John Rose had been sent to Washington, by the British government, with authority to make a treaty which would peacefully settle all pending disputes between Great Britain and the United States. These were the *Alabama* claims, the Newfoundland fishing rights and the Canadian boundary line in the Puget Sound region. The immediate result of his visit, coupled with other important forces at work, had been the appointment

of a Joint High Commission, which labored at Washington from February 27 to May 8, and brought forth the Treaty of Washington, a noteworthy landmark in the history of international arbitration. This had been ratified by the United States Senate in May, and by the British Government in June, and was proclaimed by President Grant, on July 4, 1871. It marked great concessions upon both sides in the interest of peaceful adjustment. In addition to the soothing admission of regret for the escape of the *Alabama* and other vessels from British ports, Great Britain had consented to arbitration, in the fullest and most generous sense of the word, of all pending claims. The United States, on her side, consented to ignore the fact of Great Britain's recognition of Confederate belligerency, and her negotiations showed no desire to urge the extravagant claims of Sumner which had so exasperated the British public.

The Treaty of Washington had provided, among other things, for the settlement of the *Alabama* claims, the decision to be made by an arbitration tribunal of five men, to be appointed one each, by the President of the United States, the Queen of England, the King of Italy, the Emperor of Brazil and the President of the Swiss Republic. This Arbitration Court met at Geneva on December 15, 1871, and continued its investigations until September, 1872.

The files of the American State Department contain a number of letters exchanged between Mr. Morton and men in a position to influence the British or the American Government during the historic deliberations of that Arbitration Court. They are,

of course, only incidental touches for a very great canvass; but they are important, in view of the intimacy of Mr. Morton and of his partner, Sir John Rose, with the Americans who, at various stages, controlled the American side of the negotiations. In commenting upon the origin of the Commission, one of the New York papers said: "Sir John Rose had been for weeks a guest of the Secretary of the Treasury. . . . But if he slept with Mr. Boutwell, he lived with Mr. Fish and the President. . . . To Sir John Rose, if it in truth be the mind which designed and forwarded this diplomacy, England, his country, owes as much as a nation can owe to a subject or citizen in recognition of eminent achievements."

Mr. Morton's relations with the gentlemen just mentioned was even closer than that of Sir John Rose, and together they substantially influenced the results.

At first, the representatives of the United States insisted that the Arbitration Court take into account the indirect damages which Senator Sumner had defined in 1869, while the representatives of the British Government, as directed by Mr. Gladstone, declared such claims not within its cognizance. The British press freely expressed its contempt for a nation which would insist upon such demands, and the American press did not return the soft answer which turneth away wrath. Mr. Morton, when the differences became acute, went to Washington and devoted himself to the task of inducing the American Government to withdraw its claim for indirect damages, and Sir John Rose reported to him from time to time the condition of affairs in Europe. On January 27, 1872, Sir John wrote from London: "I have written you a

long letter about the *Alabama* matter thinking you might use it with the President. Cushing's HIGH FALUTIN' is playing the devil here. Wasn't it of him that someone said: 'He would soar higher—stay up longer, and come down easier than any other man in creation?' Seriously, it is doing much harm. Already it tells on American securities. If feeling gets up, it will soon become too strong for the government. There would be a panic here if negotiations were to be broken off. I am trying all I can to keep the press and public opinion right, here—You must do the same. I have seen a good deal of Evarts and Mr. Main but they are reticent."

The next day he added, in a separate letter: "This *Alabama* business looks very ugly. . . . It is most unfortunate that Cushing had the preparation of the case—if it be really the fact. I am afraid there will be an explosion when the House meets on the 6th. I am doing all I can to calm things down, but there is a feeling that an undue and unmagnanimous advantage is being tried. I am hoping to meet an influential person tonight."

Five days later, he wrote again. "The negotiations about the *Alabama* have evidently been remitted to Washington. Everything, it appears to me, depends on the way in which this Government is asked to reconsider its demands. If authoritatively or offensively, it is all up: if in a friendly and temperate tone, I hope it will be conceded by them. The press here is behaving very foolishly—rendering the work of the two governments more and more difficult. If, unhappily, the progress of the Commission is arrested, it must lead to bad blood on your side."

Mr. Morton was able to secure the Government's attention to these warnings. On February 14, 1872, Mr. Fish acknowledged the receipt of one of them as follows:

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

I return Sir John Rose's letter as you request, having sent it to the President for his perusal.

Sir John is mistaken in the part he assigns to Mr. Cushing in the preparation of the American case. . . . Surely Sir John does not think that when two parties have agreed to submit a difference to arbitration, the defendant is to dictate what the plaintiff is to claim. His good sense is too great to entertain the idea, which seems now to have taken possession of the English press, and of some part of the British Government, that Great Britain is to be, at the same time, a party to a lawsuit, the counsel of the opposing party, and the Judge. This . . . is "rather much" for us—Unless Great Britain means to make trouble, there is no reason to apprehend any. IF THEY HAD READ THE AMERICAN CASE EITHER AS LAWYERS OR AS STATESMEN (there is a significance in these words) and not as politicians, they would not have raised the excitement which may prove too strong for the continuance in power of those who incited the outcry for the purpose of operating adversely to our prospects before the Tribunal. It has come back to plague the inventors.

When we receive the letter, etc., we shall be calm and friendly and try to help our unwise brethren out of their scrape, but our "Case" is BEFORE THE

TRIBUNAL. What the "Counter Case" may be, *nous verrons.*

I am very truly yours,

HAMILTON FISH.

L. P. MORTON, ESQ.
New York.

In his reply, Mr. Morton inclosed another of Sir John's warning letters, which Secretary Fish acknowledged as follows:

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1872.

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

I return Sir John's letter with thanks. I hope that they do not expect on the other side to tell us how we must present our side of the "case." We cannot withdraw any part of it. When their letter comes we will return a friendly answer, but we must leave the printed matter as it is. We shall not close the door to friendly settlement. I hope they have the courage not to let the press (which they first incited for another object), force them to shut it in our face. They have done an unwise thing. I will try to help them out, but they must also help themselves and not attempt to drive us—they CANNOT be litigant, counsel for their opponent, and Judge, all at once.

I am very truly yours,

HAMILTON FISH.

L. P. MORTON, ESQ.
New York.

For months the correspondence continued, Sir John Rose offering suggestions from London, Mr. Morton

receiving them in New York and passing them on to Washington. The perfect freedom with which the Secretary of State discussed the issues with the New York banker, who had never held office and was guiltless of diplomatic experience, is at times startling, in view of the difficulties of the question and the importance of a peaceful adjustment. On March 30, 1872, for example, he wrote:

L. P. MORTON, ESQ.
New York.

MY DEAR SIR:

Thanks for your letter. If Great Britain has no more desire to avoid the Treaty than have the United States, the Arbitration will proceed, and within a short time the indirect claims will be with the things that were, and will never more disturb either government. If, however, Great Britain repudiates the Treaty, both direct and indirect claims will remain with the additional grievance of a broken and repudiated agreement. We cannot consent that Great Britain construe the Treaty both for herself and for us. We are quite willing that the Tribunal construe it and shall be wholly content with their decision that Great Britain is not liable for the indirect claims. Between you and me, I have never supposed that she was liable and in the "case" they are not advanced as *demands* but having engaged even more of public attention, especially in Great Britain, than the direct claims, having been subject of discussion and necessarily presented to the first Commission, and not challenged or acceded to before that body they must be gotten rid of, or else remain for some

future period of irritation or of excitement to be brought up again to disturb the harmony of relations of the two governments. They are presented as "make weights" at the most—but especially as long existing questions and grounds of complaints and were set forth in the interest of the future good relations of the two Powers.

But admit for a moment, for the sake of argument, that it was a mistake (which I do not concede) to present them in the way in which they are presented. How can an independent State *withdraw* them under the implied assumption of the right of Great Britain to determine for the U. S. what claims may or may not be presented. Threats of withdrawal from the Arbitration (come) not only in the British press but in the British Parliament and from the Ministers of the Crown.

From the 8th day of March, 1871, when I read a paper to the Joint Commission, setting them forth in the same manner in which they are set out in the "Case" until nearly six weeks after the "Case" had been in the possession of the British Government and long after the press of G. B. had been discussing them, objecting to their extravagance, but not questioning the power of the Tribunal to press them, we heard no word of exception to their consideration of the Arbitrators, or of want of jurisdiction over them. I inclose an article from the *N. Y. Herald* on the slow progress of the British mind toward the position it now holds.

We have another Treaty with G. B. made in 1846 for the settlement of the Northwestern boundary—We put one construction on it—G. B. put a different construction.

You think that this Government might, without discredit, abandon its position—it would be difficult *after* the position which Great Britain has taken—but what do you think Great Britain might do with regard to the other Treaty? We cannot make *all* the concessions—Must Great Britain have her way in both? Of course, I know what will be your answer—but why do not those in G. B. who are anxious for a settlement, think of asking her to make some concessions? With them, as with the Amateur, Volunteer, Peripatetic American Diplomats who write or publish letters, it is *this* Government which must do all the yielding, and must "back out" whenever the Lion shakes his Mane. . . .

I am, my Dear Sir, very truly yours,
(Signed) HAMILTON FISH.

In the end, however, the American Government took the course which Mr. Morton had ventured to suggest: not because he had suggested it, but because it offered the only chance of the peaceful adjustment which both governments sincerely desired. Tidings of the pending change came to Mr. Morton in the following letter, written five weeks later, by President Grant's private secretary:

MY DEAR MORTON:

England has suggested making an additional article to the Treaty on the subject of indirect damages. We replied simply that this would require the ratification of the Senate, and such a thing could not be done by the simple act of the Executive.

Should she renew this proposition I think there

will be a disposition here to add the Article and submit it to the Senate. It would give rise to a lively debate but might be ratified. I think this plan should be tried. It seems the only door left open.

Patterson's telegram arrived this p. m.

Yours very truly,
HORACE PORTER.

L. P. MORTON, ESQ.
New York.

Two weeks later, General Porter added, in a brief note: "The Article has been amended in Committee so as to be in less objectionable form for our people, and yet not altered in substance. It is now hoped that all the Committee, even Schurz, will report favorably, except Casserly. To bring to bear anything that will reach him, a UNANIMOUS report in its favor from the Committee would be half the battle gained. I think now that Trumbull will go for it. I feel there is a good chance of carrying, but it will take GREAT WORK YET. Barlow will come on at once with a good lot of Democrats and secure some people—particularly, Casserly. This is all-important. It will come up Wednesday, and be debated for several days."

The final word came to Mr. Morton from President Grant, "the man of silence":

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, D. C.
May 27th, 1872.

DEAR SIR:

Your note of the 24th inst., withdrawing a former letter, is received. I did not retain the letter referred

to but destroyed it when read, and, I believe, without anyone but myself being aware of the contents.

The treaty Article, as you no doubt have learned, passed the Senate with but eight dissenting votes. If there is a failure now it must be entirely the fault of the British Govt.

I feel much hope now that Congress will get through and adjourn by the 3rd of June. I am anxious to get away.

Yours truly,

(Signed) U. S. GRANT.

L. P. MORTON, ESQ.
New York City.

There was no failure. The Geneva award of September 14, 1872, declared that England, having failed to preserve the proper neutral attitude during the war between the American States, should pay to the United States the sum of $15,500,000; and General Horace Porter wrote to Mr. Morton: "I do not know any one who deserves success more than you in regard to the treaty, and you now have it. . . . What you have done has been fully appreciated here."

That appreciation was later manifested by the appointment of Morton, Rose & Co., in association with Messrs. Rothschild and other London bankers, as agents for the transfer of the $15,500,000 awarded to the United States by the Court of Arbitration. By this time the Morton firms, to quote a later resolution of the New York Chamber of Commerce, were "known in all the important financial centres of the world."

The London *Times*, of June 28, 1873, in an editorial entitled *Indirect Claims*, thus sums up its opinion of Mr. Morton and Sir John Rcse in this famous case: "The influential services of these gentlemen and their friends in the matter resulted in the framing of a plan of adjustment which has been well received by the public and the Press. The United States and Great Britain are to make the question of consequential damages an axiom of international law, so that in regard to the present case this axiom is to operate *ex-post facto*, while if future cases of the kind arise, so far as Great Britain and the United States are concerned, there will be a law to govern them. The new rule is to be that in future wars a neutral is not to be held by a belligerent to be responsible for any Indirect or Consequential Damages that may arise from the escape of any armed ships from her ports.

"While the Ministers are to be praised for their success, the public ought to recognize also the great services done in this long and vexatious negotiation by two gentlemen not directly connected with either government, but who devoted much time and trouble to reconciling the differences between them, Sir John Rose, of London, and Mr. L. P. Morton, of New York, who rendered most valuable services in this matter, keeping up one almost constant communication by cable; and while each had at his side influential coadjutors, yet the value of their individual efforts is appreciated at Washington as it must be in London."

Many years later, in March, 1898, when President McKinley was facing the danger of war with Spain over the island of Cuba, Mr. Morton wrote to him,

offering his services, and adding, as his own view of what his firms had accomplished for the Grant administration when the *Alabama* question was menacing: "The negotiations which brought about the agreement for the appointment of the Joint High Commission to settle the *Alabama* claims, were carried on through my late partner, Sir John Rose, and myself, with Mr. Fish. Sir John Rose was in close confidential relations with the British Government at that time, and I had similar relations, not only with Mr. Fish, but with President Grant. Sir John Rose was offered an appointment on the Commission but was unable to accept. I merely mention this fact in case any conditions should arise where outside services could be made useful in obtaining information."

CHAPTER IV

ENTRANCE INTO POLITICS

His entrance into politics was almost simultaneous with his second marriage. On February 12th, 1873, he married Miss Anna Livingston Reade Street of Poughkeepsie and New York. Anna Street was born at Poughkeepsie in 1846. Her father, William Ingraham Street, was a lawyer of note, practicing law in Poughkeepsie for the greater part of his life and dying there in 1863. After his death she and her mother moved to New York, where all her girlhood was passed. Mr. Street was a brother of Alfred Billings Street, author and poet, and a descendant of the Rev. Nicholas Street of Taunton, Massachusetts, a graduate of Oxford University in 1624 and the first of the family in America. His son, the Rev. Samuel Street, a graduate of Harvard College in 1664, was for forty-two years pastor of the church at Wallingford, Conn.

Mr. and Mrs. Street were cousins, and were descended from many of the old New York families, Billings, Livingston, Watts, Beekman and Melyn, to mention a few, which had been prominent in revolutionary and colonial times. Major Andrew Billings was a distinguished revolutionary officer; on the

other hand, John Watts, the head of the family of that name, was an ardent loyalist, and was forced to leave New York for England. Mrs. Morton's mother, Susan Watts Kearny, was a first cousin of General Philip Kearny, of Mexican and Civil War fame, and a great niece of Stephen Watts Kearny, first Governor of California. Mrs. Morton belonged, therefore, to that old Knickerbocker society of New York which had previously opened its doors to Mr. Morton.

In the political career which was so soon to absorb him, Mrs. Morton was to play an important part. While not herself ambitious for political honors, she possessed the personal qualities and social experience which admirably fitted her for the duties which devolve upon the wives of political men. She was a woman of unusual ability; wise and prudent in her judgments, and withal, possessing great charm of manner and kindness of heart. She was far more, however,—a woman of deep feelings and high ideals; with a nature of rare understanding and generosity, sharing also her husband's strong sense of duty.

In the years which were to follow, years of motherhood, and the bringing up of a large family, she was to devote herself unselfishly to the sometime conflicting interests of her husband and her children, and to exert, to the end, a profound influence in all their lives.

Mr. Morton undoubtedly owed much of his public success to her unfailing tact and ever ready support.

As the presidential year, 1876, approached, and Republican leaders of New York inspected political

material in preparation for that critical contest, Mr. Morton's availability was noted, and his career investigated. They found that his attitude toward party politics had been singularly consistent from the beginning of his mature manhood. In early years, he had been a consistent Whig, his first presidential vote having been cast for Zachary Taylor, in 1848; but when the Whig party had vanished in the contest over the Kansas-Nebraska bill of 1854, and the Republican party had arisen to take its place, he had frankly identified himself with the latter and had remained an active, consistent Republican. With no desire for honors or office, he had made his contributions and rendered his personal services freely, as one serving what he believed to be the best interests of his country. It was therefore decided to offer him the Republican Congressional nomination in the Eleventh district of New York. Mr. Salem H. Wales, owner of the *Scientific American*, and later the father-in-law of Mr. Elihu Root, was selected to approach Mr. Morton with the suggestion, and to offer him the support of Mr. Wales' associates. Mr. Morton consented to have his name presented, and the nomination was made.

In his speech of acceptance, Mr. Morton said: "It is a distinction which I have not solicited, and I am not sure of my fitness for the place. I have never been a politician, have never sought or contemplated holding public office, and am, by training and tastes, simply a man of business. If, however, in your judgment, I can serve the district and protect its interests in Congress, I shall feel constrained to regard your nomination as a plain call to public

duty, which I have no right to shirk. I believe the Republic has the right to command the service of its humblest citizen, and in obedience to that conviction I accept the nomination."

Thus he entered the political arena, not at his own request, but by the choice of his party. But political ambition came with the nomination, and a sense of responsibility for the cause which he represented. "We are," he later declared, "on the eve of an election which I believe to be of more vital importance to the whole country than any that has taken place since the lamented Lincoln was a candidate for re-election in 1864. The country has been passing through a period of great distress (Reconstruction) and depression, but already there are indications of a decided improvement of business, and I firmly believe that, with the feeling of security which the election of the Republican candidate will ensure, the country will start upon a new era of prosperity. . . . The country wants, above all things, a sound currency with a definite policy of resumption (of specie payment) at a definite time, and it is because of this policy that I am a Republican, and in favor of due preparation and honest payment in gold, in 1879." Thus, it is evident, not only that he realized in advance the critical situation which confronted the country on the eve of the election of 1876, but also that his financial views were then identical with those advanced by him in the later fight against free silver and repudiation.

Mr. Morton was in more ways than one an ideal candidate for the Eleventh District which contained almost the entire region of fashionable residences in

the city, and a vast amount of wealth. It had larger material interests to protect against unwise and unjust Congressional legislation than any other district in the United States. In fact, there were at the time States in the Union whose wealth was less than that of this metropolitan district.

As was inevitable, every imaginable pretext was advanced against Mr. Morton's candidacy. He was denounced as a "plutocrat seeking to protect the citadel of plutocracy"; "a tool of Wall Street, that great Leviathan whose aim it is to swallow all." As his entire career clearly showed, Mr. Morton was neither of these things, but an honest gentleman of firm financial and political convictions, with faith in the soundness of a judgment which had brought him business success, and a political ambition to serve his country, and to be honored by her. As a private citizen, he had been faithful to the cause which he now openly sought a chance to aid in the capacity of a national law maker. Like most Republicans of his generation, he feared the effect of a Democratic victory, believing that it would, in some measure at least, rob the nation of the finest fruits of reunion after attempted division. The *Commercial Advertiser*, of November 6, 1876, gave countenance to this same fear by denouncing Mr. Morton's Democratic opponent, Benjamin A. Willis, as "committed to the rebel claims," because, at the last session of Congress, he had "introduced several bills for damages growing out of the war. A vote for him," it added, "is a vote for rebel claims. A vote for L. P. Morton is a vote against them." *The Mail* of the same day, declared: "Morton should be elected by a majority which will

prove a lasting rebuke to such bargaining politicians as John Kelly and Samuel J. Tilden."

In the Eleventh district, however, Democracy was not rebuked. Willis was elected; but by a majority so small as to be recognized as a threat to Democratic success two years hence. His majority was less than 500 instead of the 2500 which the past history of the district seemed to justify him in expecting. *The New York Post* of November 9th, interpreted Morton's defeat in terms most exasperating to the friends of Willis, obtruding the fact that Morton was not a waning but a waxing force, the victim of political misapprehensions which would soon pass, making plain the path to victory in the next Congressional election. "Mr. L. P. Morton, the eminent banker and head of one of the four houses which constitute the syndicate," it said, "after a week's canvass of his district received 4,125 votes more than were given for the Republican candidate two years ago, and also ran well ahead of the national ticket. . . . Mr. Morton's majority outside of the twenty-first Assembly district and one election district of the nineteenth Assembly district, was 1,245. Mr. Morton was really the choice, as he was the fit representative of a large majority of the intelligent voters of the Eleventh Congressional district, and proved to be an exceptionally strong candidate."

The explanation of his failure to carry his district has been epitomized by Mr. Elihu Root in the words: "There is always a tendency to disqualify a man on account of his qualifications, especially every one who has anything to do with banking and finance."

Shortly after his defeat, the New York Civil Serv-

ice Reform Association was formed, and Mr. Morton was one of its thirty-two Charter Members, although, as Charles Collins later reminded him, "the cause was generally an object of derision." It had, however, the sympathy of the type of citizen which had been responsible for Mr. Morton's nomination to Congress, and which was preparing to nominate him again when the next Congressional campaign should give them the opportunity. His availability was greatly increased in 1878 by an appointment as honorary Commissioner to the Paris Exposition. It was, in a sense, a non-political appointment, but it gave him the publicity needed to ensure success in the next election. On October 14, 1878, he was unanimously nominated by a Convention of the Eleventh Congressional district, presided over by Joseph H. Choate, a friend of many years standing, and he accepted in a brief speech, reaffirming his platform of 1876. "I am in favor of honest money for honest labor," he said in conclusion, "a currency redeemable in gold"; and later, in an address at Harlem, he added: "I am in favor of fulfilling all national pledges of resumption of specie payment on the 1st of January next, and of a currency redeemable in gold, and of inflation—an inflation that will make current money of $250,000,000 of gold now lying idle in the vaults of the Treasury and banks."

It required vision and faith and courage to stand by the Secretary of the Treasury, John Sherman, in that day of his fiery trial. The Greenback party, purveyors of the heresy that the sole ground of acceptance of money, paper-money and metallic alike, is the stamp of the government, received more

than a million votes in that election, capturing 14 seats in Congress: and all of these delighted to pillory Sherman and his metallic myrmidons. During the campaign, Secretary Sherman invaded Ohio to preach the gospel of resumption and sound finance, and found flagrant insults awaiting him at the hands of his own people, and the press of his own State. Describing one of his meetings, the leading Democratic journal of Ohio, carried as head-lines: "Howled Down. John Sherman's Welcome Home. Turbulent and Riotous Demonstration at His Meeting in Toledo. Men made Beggars by Him Refuse to Listen to His Defense of the Process, and the Architect of National Ruin Receives a Slight Foretaste of the Hereafter."

Even in New York there were many men of position and influence who felt that Sherman's plan to make the greenback equal to gold by making the two interchangeable, was an impossible dream. Many had little sympathy with his idea of refunding the national debt so as to reduce the interest below 6%; while others, chiefly Democratic politicians—saw clearly that, if the Republicans should actually accomplish these things, they would thereby establish a dangerously firm grip upon the public confidence, and thus cement their power for an indefinite future. Mr. Morton's boldly announced views, therefore, caused the bitterest attacks upon him. He was accused of being a tool of John Sherman, some even going so far as to say that if he were elected to Congress, "he (Morton) would totally ignore the workingman's interests, to promote the disastrous aims of John Sherman . . . the cunning

trickster at the head of the Treasury Department."

The only sound historical judgment is that which is made after passions have cooled, full evidence has emerged, and results have shown the true meaning of events. Today John Sherman ranks, not as a "cunning trickster," but as a statesman who understood his problem and who courageously solved it, in the public interest. And the lapse of time has shown, with equal clearness, the soundness of judgment shown by the men who helped to promote his "aims." Membership in his syndicates of necessity implied the possession of public confidence: for the syndicates were designed to float bonds, to sell to a cautious and suspicious public securities which the government could not dispose of, unaided. "A survey of the great and old, established businesses of the commercial world," writes the eminent churchman and philosopher, Canon Burnett Hillman Streeter, in a recent volume entitled, *Reality*, "will show that firms which, over a long period, have acquired a reputation for honesty . . . acquire a connection which treats them in the same spirit." It was such a reputation, and that alone, which had caused Mr. Morton to be admitted to "one of the John Sherman syndicates."

As the Congressional campaign progressed, it became every day more evident, even to an infuriated opposition, that the "connection," which he had acquired by years of honest business, was disposed to treat his political appeals as sincere, because of the manifest sincerity of his business life. "It is no use to run against him," was the Democratic admission

the day before election: and the day after the election the verdict was "Morton elected to Congress by a majority of 7000." His majority was greater than Willis's entire vote. "Seven—and probably eight—Republican candidates for Congress have redeemed their districts in this State," declared the *New York Tribune;* "and of all of them, Mr. L. P. Morton has the satisfaction of receiving the largest majority." His total was 13,013, and of the eleven districts which had chosen Congressmen the next highest vote cast was 11,838 for A. J. McCook in the Eighth.

Mr. Morton's own interpretation of the meaning of his victory, given in response to a serenade, was: "a verdict of the people, in favor of maintaining the national honor inviolate, of a currency redeemable in gold, and of the fitness of a man of business to represent in Congress this great district."

The American system of government provides a strange hiatus for the newly elected Congressman. Elected in November, his duty is to stand aside, an impotent observer, until the assembling of the new Congress over a year later, unless the President decides to summon a special session. Thus it may easily happen that a Congressman, elected on account of his fitness to contribute to the solution of some pressing national problem, finds himself powerless until that question has ceased to be a matter of public concern. This was conspicuously true in Mr. Morton's case. The issue of the hour was the resumption of specie payment: and the fulfillment of the national pledge of resumption was his chief public concern. For years he had hoped for it, worked for it, prayed for it. The very heart of his Congressional canvass

had been the importance of resumption and the complete restoration of the gold standard. Yet as the first of January, 1879, approached, the date set for resumption, Congressman-elect Morton remained only a private citizen, without the right to employ the influence of the office to which he had been elected.

Resumption day, January 1, 1879, happened to fall on Sunday, a fact which an intelligent Congress engaged in fixing the date, might reasonably have been expected to foresee: and the tense nerves of resumptionists and soft money men alike had to remain tense until Monday, when it would appear what the public would do. Strange rumors of a combination to exhaust the nation's carefully hoarded gold reserve and thus embarrass the government at the hour of crisis, were afloat; and would-be optimists were disturbed by mental visions of a long line in Wall Street awaiting the dawn of resumption day, with great bundles of greenbacks, ready to capture the gold reserve as soon as the doors of the Sub-Treasury should be opened. Thus, for bankers like Morton, Morgan, Baring, Rothschild, Cooke, Sir John Rose, and their associates in the syndicate which had been formed to float the government's promises to pay, the dawn of January 2, 1879, marked the opening of a sporting event of the first magnitude.

Wall Street was gay with bunting; the streets were crowded with an eager throng of spectators. But they looked in vain for the long line of greenback bearers waiting to exhaust the gold reserve. Instead, from the very first hour, it was evident that resumption had succeeded: and one brief dispatch at the

hour of closing told the tale of faith working against incredulity and hostility, and begetting not ruin but saving faith: "$135,000 of notes presented for coin: $400,000 of gold for notes." That single phrase told the banking world that it might henceforth count the United States as once more among the nations that pay in gold.

John Sherman was now deluged with telegrams and letters of congratulation; and the New York Chamber of Commerce asked permission to have his portrait painted and hung beside that of Alexander Hamilton, an honor hitherto deemed too great for any financier. On January 6, Sherman wrote to Morton: "Thanks for your congratulations, which I heartily reciprocate; for the syndicate are entitled to a large portion of the merit now given to me. As I got more than my share of the abuse, it is probably thought that I should get more than my share of the credit." "With the energy and hopefulness now exhibited," he added, "we can easily refund the 5-20's within this year, and perhaps within six months."

As one of the leading bankers, both in America and in Europe, Mr. Morton was included in the plans for this new refunding venture of the Secretary of the Treasury whose sole object was to accomplish a public duty by refunding at a lower rate of interest. Just fifteen days after the date of the letter above quoted, the press presented to its readers the completed plans. It announced that a contract had been completed between the Secretary of the Treasury and Messrs. N. M. Rothschild & Sons, J. S. Morgan & Co., Seligman Bros., and Morton, Rose & Co., Drexel, Morgan & Co., J. & W. Seligman & Co., and Morton,

Bliss & Co., of New York, for the sale and delivery in Europe of not less than $5,000,000 per month of 4% bonds, upon the same terms and conditions as the popular loan then being offered in the United States, the contract to continue until the first of July, (1879), and the proceeds to be applied to refunding 6% bonds.

The service rendered the nation by the syndicates who coöperated with the Federal Treasury in these transactions now appears beyond question. Without the coöperation of the bankers, John Sherman, with all the powers of his great office at his disposal, would have been powerless to carry to a successful conclusion either his policy of resuming specie payment, or his plans for refunding debts aggregating $843,343,950, in such a way as to save the American people $14,290,416 of annual interest. With their aid, both tasks were ultimately accomplished: but the latter still awaited action by the Congress to which Mr. Morton had been elected.

In all such transactions, the government official who ventures to act through the bankers, or to share their gains, is certain to face misrepresentation from his enemies, and often misunderstanding on the part of his friends. As Congressman-elect, chosen to represent the wealthiest of constituencies, and a new member of the banking syndicate formed to float the bonds required by Secretary Sherman's refunding plan, Mr. Morton's position was one of extreme difficulty, and delicacy. The law declared that no man directly interested in trade or commerce could hold the post of Secretary of the Treasury; but no such restriction was imposed upon a Representative in

Congress. Indeed, as Mr. Elihu Root recently commented, "With credit as it stands today, it is a favor to the banker who gets the issue. Then it was a favor for the banker to help the Government."[1] Mr. Morton's conscience therefore left him perfectly free to continue his banking connections while representing his constituents in the Lower House, and he was determined that in the face of all the world, he would continue, as Congressman, to give his aid as banker to the work of floating the loans authorized by Congress, although knowing full well that his motives would be misrepresented.

On March 18, 1879, at a special session of Congress, Mr. Morton took the oath prescribed for members of the Lower House. The opposition press and the advocates of fiat money throughout the land professed to believe that he would represent the syndicate of the bondholders in Congress: but his colleagues in Congress showed themselves ready to hear him with the respect which expert knowledge, combined with an impeccable past, always commands among men of intelligence and honest purpose. The period of incubation usually expected of "cub-Congressmen" was not expected of him, and the administration freely consulted him upon the difficult financial problems facing it during those trying days.

With fourteen determined "greenbackers" seated in the 46th Congress, there was abundant need for his expert knowledge based upon practical experience, and abundant temptation to frequent speeches. A proper estimate of his own oratorical gifts, however, caused him to avoid the common Congressional

[1] Interview, September 30, 1927.

error of too much speaking. "He spoke," comments one of the correspondents of the day, "only when the right demanded speech, and with terseness, clearness and sincerity. His colleagues, knowing his singleness of purpose, accepted his statements without question, and weighed his arguments attentively. None of his addresses, bristling with facts out of his long experience in commerce and finance, exceeded fifteen minutes in delivery; yet they were conceded to be the strongest appeals that were made."

When he entered Congress, wrote Shelby M. Cullom, of Illinois, at a later date, "two continents had become familiar with his name and regarded it . . . as the synonym of integrity and fair dealing, and the passing months only served to strengthen that reputation, as he faced the then dominant issues within the field of his expert knowledge." And these words were written with full knowledge of the fact that, on April 18, 1879, Congressman Morton as the representative of Morton, Bliss & Co., and Mr. George Baker, as representative of the First National Bank of New York, had been closeted with Secretary Sherman, and had completed with him arrangements for the huge subscription to the 4% loan which wiped out the remaining ten-forties. At the end of this conference, the details of the agreement had been given out to the press by Mr. Morton and Mr. Baker, with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury.

The pressing problems of resumption and refunding disposed of, Congress faced the no less difficult questions raised by the insistent demand for the free and unlimited coinage of silver under conditions which Mr. Morton considered involved the repudiation of

honest debts. In 1878, the Republican Senate and the Democratic House of Representatives, had agreed in passing the Bland Silver Bill, which provided for the coinage of silver dollars of 412½ grains, each to be a legal tender for debts, and which ordered that such dollars be coined at a rate not less than two millions, not more than four millions per month. President Hayes had vetoed the Act: but Congress had mustered the requisite two-thirds vote and overridden the veto. The resumption of specie payment, the following year, had brought gold to par: but it had not silenced the clamor of the silver men who resented the limitations still imposed upon the coinage of silver.

On May 15, 1879, the House was engaged in the discussion of a measure known as the Warner Silver bill (H.R. No. 564), which the New York *Tribune* described as an attempt "to make the government buy all the silver, American and foreign, offered to it by private owners." The floor was assigned to Mr. Morton who denounced the measure as repudiation and an unjustifiable subsidy. His speech condensed into less than one thousand words the basic philosophy of sound money, and would have served as an admirable miniature text-book to confute the heresies of Coin's Financial School, which misled so many millions in the first glowing days of Bryan's apostleship of 1896.

"This bill," he said, "means today the repudiation . . . of one-sixth part of all indebtedness, public and private; what the measure of repudiation in the future may prove to be, will be determined alone by the future value of silver bullion.

"Are the interests of the people to be advanced by adding to the colossal wealth of the owners of silver mines or discriminating in favor of this class of property-owners? Will the dollar stamp of the United States upon 84 cents worth of silver belonging to private individuals, add to the wealth of the nation, or to that of the private individual, the owner of the bullion? Has the late coinage of silver in excess of the amount which has been used as a circulating medium, now stored in the vaults of the Treasury, added to the prosperity of the country? Everyone will answer 'No'!!

"If this bill is to become a law, it is inevitable that the country will be drained sooner or later of its gold coin and bullion, and that silver will become the sole unit of value, and that instead of a double standard, we shall have a single standard, and that of silver.

"If this bill is to become a law the German Government, and all who have silver bullion the world over, will pour it into our mints, to receive for every eighty-four cents a legal-tender silver dollar; they will make by this simple process nearly twenty per cent, and our own people, who will be obliged to receive the coins as legal-tenders, will be the losers.

"Coinage by the government is properly only an official attestation of the weight and fineness of the metal stamped or coined. A silver dollar thus attested today should contain 484.45 grains as the equivalent of a gold dollar. The present value of silver bullion in London is about fifty pence per ounce; until it is worth fifty-nine or sixty pence, the government should have the profit, if the fraud of

stamping eighty-four cents as worth a hundred is to continue.

"If this bill is to become the law of the land, its title should be changed to read: 'An act for the relief of the owners of silver mines,' and an appropriation made for the purpose of erecting elevators and warehouses for the storage of silver coin and bullion. If the owners of silver bullion can have their property carried by the government as this bill proposes, and can have certificates of its deposit made a legal tender for all dues to the United States, including custom-house duties, why not clothe bonded warehouse receipts and all other representatives of property with the same function of money?

"My constituents are not the owners of silver mines, but they are largely interested in cotton, wheat, corn, flour, iron, and copper. Why should not the government receive all of these and other products of the earth on storage, issue certificates, and make them also a legal tender? And if the supply of money should be still insufficient to satisfy the honorable gentleman from Ohio, receive also titles of real estate, issue money certificates, and so continue until every species of property becomes a part of the currency of the country? Then we can issue for general distribution, pledging whatever may remain of the faith and honor of the nation, the billion of greenbacks asked for by the reverend and distinguished gentleman who occupies a seat on this floor.

"No, Mr. Speaker, renewed and continued prosperity cannot be secured in this manner.

"The only safe way, in my opinion, is to stop the coinage of silver altogether, and to say to the leading

commercial nations of the world: 'We will not attempt to help you out of your troubles until you agree with us to use silver as a measure of value. We are ready to enter into such a mutual compact with you as will have the effect of restoring silver to its old steadiness of value, so that it may again be a measure of other values.'

"Let us not attempt to force the issue of silver beyond the amount which can be used as a circulating medium until European nations will join with us in making a silver currency equivalent in value to gold. Let us rather maintain the honor and good faith of the nation at home and abroad; retain and maintain a gold standard, the commercial standard of value throughout the world; and in my opinion the day is not far distant when the City of New York will be the clearing-house for the commercial exchanges of the world."

"Mr. Morton's speech in the House on the silver question," said the New York *Herald*, the next day, "was short, but contained more information and sense than the whole body of silver shriekers can ever befog." And two days later, upon more mature consideration, it added: "We have no fear that the Warner Silver bill now pending . . . will become a law, and, since the brief, able, and logically crushing speech of Honorable Levi P. Morton . . . it is doubtful whether this absurd bill can even pass the House. . . . The lucid and sincere exposure of its character by Mr. Morton in his exceedingly vigorous speech should give it the *coup de grâce* at once in the estimation of all reasonable and honest men."

Andrew D. White, after reading the speech as

issued in pamphlet form, wrote to Mr. Morton: "You have put the main points in such a way that they cannot be gainsaid. Your statement of the real animus of the bill, as given at the bottom of the opening page; of the effects of the bill on page 4; and your demand for your own constituents on page 5, seem to me to put the whole thing in a light so clear that any citizen of the United States can see his way out of the fog with which the opponents of a sound currency have surrounded the question."

The Warner bill failed to become a law, and Mr. Morton's share in its defeat of course led to many bitter attacks upon him. The New York *World*, in its issue of May 28, scornfully declared: "Mr. Morton is a banker and an agent of investors, and he must know how it is and why it is that prudent purchasers all over the world seem so glad to pay three per cent above par for our national four per cents, the interest on which may be payable in silver." Within twenty-four hours of this attack, the *World* received this reply, itself a contribution to the history of the silver heresy:

To the Editor of the World:

Sir:

In your leading editorial of this morning you express regret that I did not in my recent speech on the silver question, explain the reason why "prudent purchasers . . . seem so glad to pay 3% above par for our national four per cents, the interest on which may be payable in silver."

If you will allow me a few lines I will give you my reasons for the present high credit of the National

Government, viz: a world-wide belief that the people of the United States will never permit the payment of its coin obligations in 84 cent dollars, or that a nation that has hitherto maintained its honor and paid its coin obligations in honest gold dollars when gold was on its upward and downward course to and from 180 per cent above par, will now disgrace itself by forced payment in clipped silver dollars.

If this clause had become law, you could have gone to your bankers, borrowed $100,000 and with, say, $84,000 of the amount, purchased silver bullion, taken that to the Sub-Treasury, received a certificate for $100,000, paid off your loan and had $15,000 in your pocket, and repeated the operation *ad infinitum*.

While the Government can maintain silver dollars at par in gold, the fraud is not an accomplished one; but can the Government, with an unlimited issue of 84 cent dollars, long maintain them above their bullion value? I think not.

Very respectfully yours,

L. P. Morton.

May 28 [1879].

Some three weeks later, June 18, 1879, Mr. Morton made another of his compact little speeches to the House . . . this time in opposition to the bill reported by Mr. Stephens, providing for the exchange of trade-dollars for legal-tender dollars, at par. Mr. Morton christened the measure, "The trade-dollar bill, or an act for the relief of the subjects of the Emperor of China," and succinctly defined the issue thus:

"The trade-dollar is worth today about 90 cents, which would make the value of the thirty millions

held in China, $27,000,000. Now, if this bill becomes a law, we shall, so long as the Government can maintain legal-tender silver dollars at par in gold, be paying the holders of trade-dollars in China $30,000,000 in gold for $27,000,000 worth of silver, or $3,000,000 more than we can buy the same quantity of silver of our own citizens. . . . Do the gentlemen who favor this measure wish to donate $3,000,000 to the holders of trade-dollars in China?" Forty thousand copies of this speech were purchased and circulated throughout the nation, and it was widely praised as a model of convincing, sound currency philosophy.

These brief speeches fairly represent Mr. Morton's carefully matured views upon the currency problem, and they played an inconspicuous, but by no means an unimportant, part in the long conflict which has kept the United States within the ranks of the nations adhering to the gold standard.

But his chief Congressional services were rendered, not on the floor of the House, which he always occupied reluctantly, and with the consciousness that nature had not meant him for an orator, but in the Committee room, the true seat of American law making. Here, he was recognized, from the very beginning of his brief Congressional career, as a patient listener, a cautious, genial critic, and a frank adviser, whose opinions, especially upon questions of finance and foreign affairs, carried the weight of long experience and intimate knowledge. As a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, he was frequently assigned the task of drafting important reports, despite the fact that this was his first term in Congress. In them he stated facts, drew fair con-

clusions, and avoided personal recriminations, thus fixing attention upon principles, an art the lack of which has been the wreck of many fair prospects.

When opportunity offered, he showed, by practical personal actions, the sincerity and earnestness of his sympathy with men of other races and nations; but his actions were not on parade. His generosities were not for political effect, and he sought to keep them secret rather than to gain political preferment through them. During the Irish famine of 1879–1880, came an opportunity to demonstrate the falseness of the charge, made in 1878, to catch the Irish and Catholic vote of the Murray Hill district, that he was the enemy of the Irish. The United States Government, by a joint resolution, approved February 25, 1880, placed the *Constellation* at the disposal of those who wished to send aid to the starving Irish. Public interest, however, was slight until Mr. Morton, anonymously, through the New York *Herald*, on March 9, offered to provide one-fourth of the cargo if others would make up the balance. "You are authorized to announce," he wrote, "that a gentleman personally known to you, who declines to have his name made public, offers to pay one-quarter of the cargo of the *Constellation*, if other parties will make up the balance."

The challenge was promptly accepted, the *Herald* leading the way with an offer to supply one-fourth: the vessel was loaded, and many saved from starvation. It was known to Mr. Morton's intimate friends that he had determined to furnish the entire cargo in case there was any further delay in getting a load of provisions.

On April 22, 1880, Mr. Morton made a speech on the immigration bill of which, next to S. S. Cox who had introduced it, he was the principal advocate in the House. He said that it was necessary that Congress take up the subject, as on the day that he spoke, 4,200 immigrants had arrived at New York, and for the year 1879 the arrivals had been 138,945. The increase was becoming alarming and would continue. The Supreme Court had decided in 1876 that the regulation and control of immigration was a federal function; therefore, the general government must act. Foreign governments were sending in paupers, criminals and insane persons. There must be authority to refuse them admission. He insisted, at the same time, that immigration of a good class of persons should be encouraged. They had added to the wealth of the United States immeasurably. They would especially profit the South and West where there was so much vacant land. In the past, they had done good service: for example the Germans and Irish had built the great railways of the West. The bill was designed not only to protect the United States against the admission of undesirable immigrants, but to protect the immigrants themselves from the evils which now beset them when they landed. They were peculiarly the prey of sharpers and thieves who met them at the dock and in many cases fleeced them of their money and belongings before they had been in America a week. These outrages were perpetrated for the most part by the compatriots of the immigrants, Germans preying upon Germans, Irish upon Irish, etc. In the debate in Congress, Morton's figures and his view of the question were often quoted.

The bill did not pass, but in 1882 a law was enacted restricting immigration, and in 1891 federal inspectors were placed at the ports of entry and the general government assumed control.

Morton's speech was reprinted in New York and favorably commented upon. It was one of the items in building up his rising popularity in the State.

He became also the champion in Congress of the Interoceanic Canal, and on December 14, 1880, introduced the bill to incorporate the Nicaragua Canal Co. This was an earnest effort to build the canal by private capital under Government patronage. The head of the Company was General Grant. There was to be a private capital of $75,000,000. Revenue was to be derived from the tonnage dues. The charter was to come from the Federal Government. The incorporators were General Grant, E. D. Morgan, Hugh J. Jewett, Howard Porter, William R. Garrison, Frederick Billings, Frederick Butterfield, J. Thomas de Franco, Edward F. Beale and William Dennison, all of them, except General Grant, capitalists of approved ability. The title of the Company was The Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua. There was to be an issue of 500,000 to 1,000,000 shares of stock at $100 a share and of bonds to one half the amount of the stock.

Throughout the country there was much discussion of this project. The dream of connecting the oceans, a dream long followed by the unfortunate French Panama Canal Company of which De Lesseps was the head, now seemed to be approaching realization through American action.

On December 17, the bill was taken from the Com-

mittee on Commerce and referred to the select Committee on an Interoceanic Canal, but it did not pass. There was fear that it would saddle a great expense upon the Government. Congress did give a charter to the Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua, on February 20, 1889, but that year the Panama Canal Company failed and the Nicaragua Company never got beyond the preliminary stage.

Mr. Morton's interest in building up the industries of the country made him a protectionist. He reasoned on the subject as a practical man. He agreed with General Garfield that "We legislate for the people of the United States, not for the whole world," and to him it seemed a simple matter of duty to pass laws which would have the effect of increasing American industries, extending American trade, adding to the list of American products. He never doubted that such a policy would increase the wages and raise the standard of living of the working classes.

But, protectionist though he was, he believed in revising the tariff in certain directions and presented two measures for that purpose—one to reduce the duty on steel rails, and the other to abolish the duty on type, salt, print-paper and paper-making materials. This bill came up on April 5, 1880, and Mr. Morton was the only Republican from the Eastern States who voted for it.

Another economic question which attracted him was the development of the fisheries, although this was not a matter in which his constituents were directly concerned. Here was an industry which employed many people, which furnished large quantities of food to the masses, and which needed development

and encouragement from the Government. An international fisheries exhibition was to be held at Berlin in April, 1880, and the German Government had invited the United States Government to be an exhibitor. The Committee on Foreign Affairs acted favorably on a resolution authorizing the Government to accept and send an exhibit. The expense of this modest undertaking was to be limited to $20,000. Morton reported the resolution for the Committee and supported it with a speech. He said that fish was the poor man's food. If the fisheries were properly developed the price of fish would be so low that everybody, practically, would be able to buy it. He recited the progress that had been made in restocking American streams and in fish culture generally. The discovery in Germany and France that fish could be propagated to almost any extent by artificial means had created one of the most important of modern industries and proved of incalculable benefit to mankind. America, which should take the lead in fish production, actually occupied only third place, following Norway and France. An international exhibition would bring to our notice varieties of fish which could be naturalized in our waters. The United States should take part in the exhibition as a matter of international comity because other great nations were doing so. He gave a general résumé of the progress of fish culture in the United States under the United States Fish Commission. The resolution was carried without difficulty.

Congressmen ordinarly enjoy far less social life in Washington than do the members of the Upper House. Elected for a term of only two years, with

the uncertainties of a new election ever before them, few Representatives attempt, during their first terms at least, to join in the activities of the gayer Washington. In this respect, also, Mr. Morton was an exception to the rule. His social instinct was based upon a real interest in humanity, and he had the ability to enter sympathetically into the life of any community into which he was thrown: while Mrs. Morton, was not only an experienced hostess, but a very gracious one, able to harmonize discordant elements, and skillful in the art of leading conversation away from dangerous topics. Their house on H and 15th Streets, therefore, speedily became a favorite meeting place for political and social Washington. There the Congressman from the frontier met with a sense of comradeship the Senator from the eastern city, the European diplomat, the Oriental, or the South American. The hostilities engendered by hot debate, or international friction, seemed not to enter these pleasant rooms, where government and opposition met face to face, or diplomat met diplomat, although there was apparent no effort to prevent the freest discussion of the topics of the day, national or international.

Urbane manners, a friendly spirit and unfailing kindliness, combined with a generous hospitality, made Mr. Morton one of the most popular members of Congress; and, despite the frankness with which he expressed his own views upon points or policies occupying public attention, he made few enemies. To state facts without making enemies is always difficult when human emotions are deeply involved, and in the eighties these were of necessity affected whenever

the South was mentioned: but Mr. Morton kept his Southern friends, even when expressing his uncompromisingly Union sentiments. During the campaign preceding the New York State elections of 1879, for example, he denounced sectionalism, the greenback movement and the free silver heresy, placing the latter two in the category of repudiation.

"The Republican candidates and the Republican party," he said, in introducing the Secretary of State, Wm. M. Evarts, to a Cooper Union audience, "stand pledged anew to national supremacy, equal rights, free elections and honest money. They claim, and have declared in their platform, that the Republic of the United States is a nation and not a league; that the nation is supreme within its constitutional sphere; that it has power to guard its own life, to protect its own citizens and to execute its own laws. The opposite doctrine of state sovereignty is the mother of nullification, secession and anarchy. . . . The Democratic party, controlled in each House in Congress by Southern members, stands for the extreme assertion of state sovereignty, with its twin heresy that the Union is a mere Confederacy of States."

His summing up of the financial questions of controversy was equally definite: "Republican financial policy, despite Democratic and Greenback opposition, has achieved the successful resumption of specie payments, has restored confidence, brought renewed prosperity, reduced the national interest-bearing debt from $2,400,000,000 in 1865, to $1,800,000,000, and the annual interest charge from $151,000,000 to $84,000,000. The allied Democratic and Greenback party, through their representatives in Congress,

voted, almost to a man, in favor of the unlimited coinage of 85 cent silver dollars and the unlimited issue of legal tender certificates at that rate against silver bullion, without awaiting the concurrence of other commercial nations in the restoration of the commercial value of the silver dollar. The Republican representatives, almost to a man, opposed this measure. . . . Will the Democrats of the North, who stood by Abraham Lincoln and the Army of the Union under the heroic leadership of Grant, now consent to place the control of the National Government in the hands of men who sought its destruction? Will they support the financial policy of the allied Greenback and Democratic party, controlled by a solid South? I believe not. Let the Democrats and Republicans of New York unite once more, and declare . . . that the Republic of the United States is a nation . . . that every citizen of the United States shall have a free vote, and that the honor and good faith of the Republic shall be held sacred for all time . . . and all the fallacies of State rights, 'fiat' money and the fraudulent coinage of silver will be buried beyond the hope of resurrection in 1880."

As the election of 1880, a Presidential year, approached, and the guessing regarding the fate of Congressmen began, few doubted that Mr. Morton would return, and fewer still hoped for his defeat. He counted among his personal friends a surprising number of men of national reputation and eminence, including Thomas B. Reed, the wittiest man in Congress, ex-President Grant, the most silent man in America, William McKinley and James A. Garfield, future presidents, and James G. Blaine, the best

loved and most hated of public men, but he also counted as friends many men of lesser eminence, Congressmen representing frontier constituencies, inconspicuous government officials, and unofficial dwellers in Washington. In 1878, he had taken his seat in Congress, with no previous experience in official life, either local, state, or national. In 1880, he returned to New York to find a national career awaiting him.

CHAPTER V

A NATIONAL FIGURE IN POLITICS

The opening of the year, 1880, saw the country facing another Presidential campaign, and one involving as aspirants for the Presidency, a number of men with whom Mr. Morton was upon terms of intimacy. General Grant, James G. Blaine, and John Sherman were all his close friends; while the yet unsuspected "dark horse," James A. Garfield, was even nearer to him, on the personal side.

At first, having been chosen merely as an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention, there seemed little likelihood that Mr. Morton would as an elector in the Convention be called upon to decide between them; but the withdrawal of the regular delegate from his district made him a voting member, and at once a Washington correspondent wrote: "Morton is understood to be a Sherman man." At this his Grant friends and his Blaine friends immediately manifested their displeasure. Mr. Morton, with characteristic directness and with no attempt to ride two horses at the same fair, at once issued a statement declaring himself unequivocally for Grant; and the Buffalo *Express* published the prophecy:

"Congressman Morton's position as a steadfast advocate of Grant's nomination being now established beyond any reasonable cavil or doubt, nobody need be surprised to see him loom up at Chicago as a very eligible candidate for Vice President. Few of New York's prominent Republicans possess the confidence of the people more fully than Mr. Morton." It added the opinion that his name would prove "a tower of strength with the business and commercial world." By other papers his name was as freely coupled with the mission to England, the coming nomination for Governor of New York, or "some important cabinet post."

Such comments, and they were legion, afford a sufficient justification for the opinions freely expressed, that no member had ever acquired such marked influence or risen to such immediate distinction as Congressman Morton, and that few had beheld so many tempting vistas open to their ambition. Mr. Morton, however, seemed content to stand for a second term in Congress, the nomination for which was generally conceded to be his without the asking. He had earned that, but as yet he saw no reason to expect or to hope for greater honors in the immediate future.

About a week before the opening of the Republican National Convention, Mr. and Mrs. Morton went to Chicago. Here, although discreetly refusing to talk for publication, Mr. Morton reiterated his earlier assertion that he was a Grant man, "first, last and all the time," despite which declaration, the first number of the Republican campaign journal bore the names of "John Sherman of Ohio for President,

and Levi P. Morton of New York for Vice President."

The New York Republican State Convention had been organized and directed by Senator Roscoe Conkling, who had been a member of the radical wing responsible for the Congressional plan of reconstruction, and who was now the national leader of the movement to give General Grant a third term as President. That Convention had instructed its delegation to vote for Grant in the Convention, and its leader, Conkling, made the nominating speech for Grant. His oratorical gifts were of a rare order, and upon this occasion he excelled himself, giving the public the dramatic element which they had learned to expect from him. For a time the star of the hero of Appomattox seemed in the ascendant, despite the tradition against a third term for any president, and despite the powerful opposition of Conkling's bitter enemy, James G. Blaine, and his anti-Grant followers. In view of the divided condition of New York Republicanism, it was obviously important to select from New York State a vice presidential candidate who in the event of Grant's nomination could conciliate the Blaine faction, and Mr. Morton was naturally considered in that connection. Despite the fact that, in 1878, the *Irish Democrat* had declared it "an insult to ask either Irish or Catholic electors to aid in placing an English banker (Levi P. Morton) in the Congress of the United States," Conkling was promptly informed that half a million Irish voters would now be glad to see him nominated as Vice President, on the Grant ticket; and various other factional groups intimated the same desire. On

June 7, the New York *Herald* declared: "There is a general desire that Mr. L. P. Morton shall have a strong complimentary vote, if not more, for the vice presidency. . . . If he does not get it, it will be because stern fate, in the guise of availability, rules otherwise."

The Republican National Convention, however, presently took a turn which nullified all of Conkling's carefully laid plans, and disposed summarily of the question of a running mate for Grant. James A. Garfield had been selected to present the name of Sherman as candidate for the Presidential nomination, and he made so deep an impression upon the Convention, that it turned from his candidate to himself. On the thirty-sixth ballot, by a union of Blaine and Sherman forces, Garfield was nominated despite his indignant declaration that no one had a right to vote for him without his consent. "And that consent," he shouted, "I refuse."

Despite the temptation to follow the current, Grant's delegates showed throughout an astonishing devotion. His first vote was 304, his last was 306, and during the long struggle culminating in the Garfield landslide, he stood always between 302 and 309. Throughout, Conkling persistently rallied Grant's forces with the words: "I am here as the agent of New York to support General Grant to the end. Any man who would forsake him under such conditions, does not deserve to be elected, and could not be elected"; and "to the end," also, despite alluring whispers from the Sherman ranks and later from those of Garfield, Morton was found with Conkling among the 306 who stood by Grant.

The presidential candidate selected, there came the immediate search for an eastern man, a Grant man, a man with few enemies and many "Stalwart" friends, for the vice presidency; and the roving eyes of the searchers turned first to Morton. Fortunately we have, in the form of a letter to Honorable De Alva S. Alexander, Mr. Morton's own version of this incident.

ELLERSLIE, RHINECLIFF, N. Y.
September 14, 1908.

HON. DE ALVA S. ALEXANDER,
Buffalo, N. Y.

DEAR MR. ALEXANDER:

In reply to your letter of August 14th which I found upon my return from Europe, I beg to say that immediately upon the announcement of the nomination of General Garfield for the presidency, the chairman of the Ohio delegation came to me at my seat on the floor, and informed me that General Garfield desired my nomination for the office of Vice President. I said that my nomination must not be made without previous consultation with my associates who had supported the candidacy of General Grant.

I sent immediately for Senator Conkling and informed him of the visit of the chairman of the Ohio delegation and General Garfield's desire for my nomination for the office of Vice President, to which he replied: "If you think the ticket will be elected, if you think you will be happy in the association, accept." I replied: "I have more confidence in your judgment than in my own." He said, "Gov. Boutwell of Massachusetts is a great friend of yours. Why

don't you talk with him?" Gov. Boutwell, after further consultation, gave his advice against my acceptance of the nomination.

An adjournment was then decided upon, and a meeting of the New York Committee was called for conference. General Arthur remained in his private room, and some other member of the committee acted as chairman. My impression at the time was that General Arthur was desirous of receiving the nomination but that Senator Conkling, who was with him in his private room during the session of the committee, was opposed to his acceptance.

Very sincerely yours,

L. P. Morton.

"On my way back to the hotel," wrote Mr. Morton, at a later date, "I met Mr. Whitelaw Reid and Walter Phelps who urged me to accept the nomination. I replied, 'Upon the advice of friends in whom I have great confidence, I have already declined.'"

The New York *Herald* of June 10, 1880, informed its readers that Mr. Morton of New York, was "tendered the nomination for the vice presidency by Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Vermont, and other States, and it was believed it would be almost unanimous, but he declined the nomination and withdrew his name from the New York delegation, preferring active duty as a representative of a New York district in Congress rather than to assume the labor and responsibility of a presidential campaign, with all the honor and dignity of the vice presidential chair."

It was not, however, any shrinking from the labor

and responsibility of a presidential campaign which led Mr. Morton to refuse to have his name presented. It was rather a sense of loyalty to the group with which he had been fighting Grant's losing battle, and his recognition of the fact that in this case Senator Conkling represented the judgment of that group.

Chester A. Arthur, of New York, a man with far less apparent qualifications for the position than had Mr. Morton, was next approached, and in the face of Conkling's disapproval, was presented as the choice of the New York delegation, to be elected Vice President, and to succeed to the Presidency within seven months after inauguration through the tragic and untimely death of President Garfield, on September 19, 1881.

In presidential campaigns, financiers are among the necessities: and it was not long after the adjournment of the Chicago Republican National Convention before General Garfield made it quite clear that Levi P. Morton's assistance was urgently required. Obviously, Mr. Morton's own race for Congress needed little attention, for his district was clearly behind him, and victory was regarded as certain, quite regardless of campaigning. He was therefore in a receptive mood when William E. Curtis reported, on July 20: "The General (Garfield) spoke very highly of you, and expressed regret that you had not permitted yourself to be placed upon the ticket with him. While he did not consider that the vice presidential candidate was ordinarily effective beyond personal popularity, he said your name upon the ticket would have placed New York out of the doubtful list."

Eleven days later General Garfield followed this conciliatory opening with the following letter:

MENTOR, O., July 31, 1880.

DEAR MR. MORTON:

Your esteemed favor of the 27th came duly to hand. With some reluctance as to the wisdom of the movement I have concluded to meet the National Committee on the 5th prox. and shall hope to see you there.

I note what you say in reference to my candidacy and thank you for your cordiality. I earnestly hope you will take the chairmanship of the Com. on Finance and give your powerful aid to the campaign. I hope to talk more fully when we meet. With kind regards to Mrs. Morton, I am

Very truly yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

HON. L. P. MORTON,
New York.

After due consultation with his fellow Stalwarts, Mr. Morton decided to accept the burden thus offered, and become the chief financial agent for the National Republican Committee. We have, however, ample evidence to show that, before Morton's acceptance was announced, and indeed before the letter just quoted was written, the Stalwart chiefs had decided to bring the candidate to New York.

At first Garfield hesitated to make the visit: but pressure was at once brought, the Conkling machine threatening, to quote the words of Mr. Garfield's biographer, Theodore Clarke Smith, "that unless

they had assurances from him they would not lift a finger in the campaign," and "transmitting their position with the most unsparing frankness." The visit was finally arranged for August 5th, Garfield's demand, that an invitation be sent by the men to be consulted, having been first fulfilled.

After a journey which was a succession of orations at the railway stations at which his train halted, the General was met at Buffalo by a New York delegation, and conducted, on his arrival in New York, to an apartment in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, then the political Mecca. That evening, he met, at a private residence, a number of private citizens of the great financial group, and some publicists and leading men of New York. The class known as "politician" was conspicuously absent. All were, however, Republicans in affiliation, and all were Garfield men. A chairman was elected, a secretary appointed, and injunctions of secrecy were emphasized. General Garfield was then asked to express his views upon the state of the campaign in New York, and he frankly expressed his doubt as to the victory which all so much desired, and emphasized the importance of speedy action, prompt and drastic. New York he described as "the darkest spot," and prompt action in New York as the vital necessity. General Garfield was a brilliant and ready speaker, and his words carried conviction, while his personality generated loyalty and devotion.

Starting with the man on his right, the chairman then asked each in turn to give his views upon the question: "What shall be done?" All expressed a praiseworthy desire for action, but each in turn failed

to define just what action should be taken, until Mr. Morton was reached. His seat was on the left of the chairman, and his turn therefore came last. "My speech," he said, "is in these few words: let us raise money for necessary campaign expenses and appoint a committee to spend it, independent of politicians."

At the close of these indeed few words, Mr. Morton took his seat, but at once he was invited to act as chairman of a committee to collect and disburse the funds needed to carry New York by legitimate campaigning. This was a heavy burden to lay upon a man whom General Garfield had already decided to make chief fiscal agent for the National Republican Committee: but the need was urgent, the two positions compatible, and Mr. Morton the obvious choice for both. At first he declined, but later, in deference to General Garfield's insistence, and that of the other members of the conference, he consented.

His first act was to demand liberal subscriptions on the spot, and some of the gentlemen present complied at once. Others felt it necessary to consult partners or associates, or to arrange bank balances to cover the substantial checks required, and Mr. Morton thereupon declared that he would himself advance the sum necessary to secure immediate action, trusting that the deferred checks would be sent at the earliest convenient moment.

This interpretation of the manner of Garfield's visit to New York, and of his first conference there, represents a combination of the records left on file by Mr. Morton, and certain items from General Garfield's papers. His first conference, however, was not

the most famous of those which he attended during his two strenuous days in the metropolis. That place of honor belongs, without question, to the candidate's meeting with the New York political leaders, a circumstantial account of which is preserved in the autobiography of Thomas C. Platt. In considering that account, however, it is only fair to recall the fact that Platt wrote with a purpose, and not the purpose which inspires the historian. His work, in what he considered the field of history, was done after the famous Conkling-Platt-Garfield controversy which freed the United States Senate, temporarily, of Platt, and permanently of Roscoe Conkling, and it should therefore be received not as history but as a brief in favor of Platt's contentions. With a pen which never falters, Platt paints a graphic picture of the meeting of New York's political élite and the Republican presidential candidate, the aim being to get present support for Garfield, and future support for the faithful of the Grant-Conkling machine, still sullen under its Chicago defeat.

"On the morning of the second day after Garfield's arrival," he says, "a meeting was arranged at the rooms in the Fifth Avenue Hotel occupied by Levi P. Morton, to bring General Garfield into conference with a few of Mr. Conkling's friends. There were present at that interview General Garfield, General Arthur, the Honorable Levi P. Morton, Richard Crowley and myself. There were three primary motives for the consultation; to pacify Garfield for Conkling's absence, to have an understanding with General Garfield as to his future relations and intentions toward the controlling power in the State of

New York, namely, the Grant-Conkling machine, and, thirdly, if the former were arranged to mutual satisfaction, to adopt ways and means of procuring money to carry on the canvass. For the latter purpose, the presence of the Honorable Levi P. Morton was invoked, the scheme being to put Mr. Morton at the head of a special committee consisting of a dozen of the wealthiest and most influential bankers and business men, who should be charged with that duty. General Garfield himself had already urged Mr. Morton to assume that onerous and thankless burden, but up to that time he had refused."

Two weeks after his visit to New York, on August 30, General Garfield sent to the candidate for Vice President, Chester A. Arthur, a letter frankly describing his view of the campaign at what he called its "most critical point." He expressed confidence in his ability to carry Maine, whose election, held in September, is always regarded as the straw indicating the direction of the political winds. Indiana now seemed to him the critical point. "If we can carry Indiana in October," he said, "the rest is comparatively easy," but "we must overcome a Democratic majority of 6,000." "Please read this letter to Morton," he added, "and urge him to act as promptly and vigorously as possible. . . . Let me hear the result of your conference with Morton as soon as possible."

The answer was satisfactory, Mr. Morton undertaking to get the money so imperatively needed for "the crisis"; but even yet, finances remained in a distressing plight, as General Garfield's next letter clearly shows:

LAWNFIELD, MENTOR, OHIO
Sept. 3, 1880.

MY DEAR MORTON:

Yours of the 1st inst., with letters enclosed, came duly to hand. I appreciate the difficulty of raising money so early in the campaign. But we have reached a stage of the contest where the Democrats are trusting less to arguments than to management. They have become thoroughly alarmed at the manifest impression which the solid South, and the danger to the business interests of the country, are making upon the people, and are now employing the Barnum methods in Indiana. They know that if we carry that State their cause is lost—and hence the frantic efforts they are making. To meet them promptly, to watch them thoroughly, is to foil and defeat them. If we carry Indiana, you will find it easy to raise all the money needed for N. Y. and other States. Senator Dorsey[1] thinks you might visit me and see a full statement of the work being done in Indiana. I would be glad to have you do so—if you can spend a few days without seriously delaying your committee work. Perhaps I might aid you in that, more than the lost time would delay you. If you come, please telegraph me on what train you will arrive.

As ever yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

HON. L. P. MORTON,
New York.

The Maine election disappointed the eager hopes of the Republican candidate, being little better than

[1] Stephen W. Dorsey, then Secretary of the Republican National Committee.

a drawn battle where hope had pictured a smashing victory. There the Greenback sentiment was surprisingly strong, and its chief Maine apostle, Solon Chase, understood how to fit its fallacies to the farmers. Thomas B. Reed's brilliant wit, his references to the happy land of Hayti, where "they actually have dollars three for a cent," and his humorous characterizations "Solon and his paper paradise," were perhaps a little "highbrow," as the modernist would say: and in consequence, he almost lost his seat, winning by only 109 votes.

On September 17, Garfield thus replied to a letter from Morton relative to this disappointment: "You have hit upon the true solution of the problem in Maine. Our friends claimed too much and did not calculate upon the enormous expenditure of money which the Democrats made during the last four days of the campaign. Still we (should) have carried the State, and every Republican I have seen since the Maine election is more determined than ever to win the victory. We shall get more work out of our people in every way in consequence of it. It is the Bull Run of the contest—let us win at Appomattox. I am somewhat disappointed, but not discouraged. You will have more help in consequence of it. Push the fight in Indiana."

New York too was a source of great anxiety to the Garfield leaders, as Conkling was sullen and imperious, while Platt had already earned, though he had not yet been given, the suggestive title "Me Too." Mr. Morton's friendly relations with these two all-powerful leaders and his personal friendship for General Grant, made him, therefore, a factor in the

political as well as the financial side of the campaign, which fact General Garfield recognized in the following letter:

Personal

MENTOR, OHIO, Sept. 24, 1880.

MY DEAR MORTON:

Yours of the 22nd came duly to hand. General Grant writes me that he cannot leave Chicago until Monday and hence cannot visit me before the Warren meeting but must go directly there. I understand Senator Conkling will reach Warren by the way of Pittsburgh. I hope you will not fail to come with the party and visit me after the Warren meeting and I hope that General Grant and the Senator will also be able to come.

Our friends in the West are everywhere doing good work, but there has recently appeared both in the State and in Indiana, evidences that a considerable amount of money is being distributed among the Democrats.

Very truly yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

Mr. Morton accepted the invitation and accompanied General Grant and Senator Conkling to Mentor: but there was no opportunity found for the intimate, personal conversation which he had hoped to have with the Republican nominee. A few days after his return to New York, he received from the General, the following letter:

LAWNFIELD, MENTOR, OHIO
Sept. 28, 1880.

DEAR MR. MORTON:

The first decisive crisis of the campaign is before us, and will terminate in the October elections two weeks from today. If the Democracy lose Indiana, they have no hope for November. If we make a drawn battle in that State, our chances for November are still good. If we lose ground there in October, we shall be very seriously crippled in entering the Nov. battle—Hence, a ton of force applied to the October fight is worth ten tons in November.

The Republicans were never so well organized in Indiana as now. With an honest vote, I have no doubt of a victory. But we must resist Democratic frauds, which will import thousands of votes. We can resist this successfully only by being able to put a great number of active, faithful Republicans in the field to watch and prevent the outrages. I hope our friends in the East will give all the help they can to make a fair fight.

With kindest regards, I am

Very truly yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

HON. L. P. MORTON
New York.

In the meantime, Mr. Morton's friends had not neglected the question of his re-nomination for Congress, and, in September the prediction was made by the press, that "the re-nomination of the Honorable L. P. Morton will be the result of a unanimous and spontaneous expression of the appreciation in which

his great services are held by his district—an appreciation shown by Republicans everywhere; for Mr. Morton, although unpretentious as a speechmaker, has made some of the most effective speeches that have been delivered in the House—effective because of the terseness, clearness and power with which he has handled the financial questions, especially."

On October 9th, the Republican Congressional Convention of the Eleventh district fulfilled this prediction to the letter. At eight o'clock the Convention was called to order, in Morton Hall, No. 8 East 59th Street. Colonel Rush C. Hawkins presiding, General John H. Cochrane presented Mr. Morton's name, in an highly eulogistic speech and, when the prolonged cheers died away, the chairman asked, "Are there other nominations?" No other names being mentioned, a committee composed of one delegate from each assembly district, was despatched to inform Mr. Morton that his nomination had been made by acclamation. After a brief absence, the committee returned, escorting the candidate, who expressed his thanks for "a unanimous and unsolicited re-nomination." In his speech of acceptance, he impressed upon his hearers that his election to Congress was bound up in that of General Garfield to the Presidency. He spoke of Garfield with warm commendation. He was a soldier and a statesman, whose name was inscribed upon nearly every page of Congressional history during the past eighteen years. He was a man of the people who had worked his way up step by step "through long laborious years." He spoke of the war record of his party which had subdued the rebellion, freed four million slaves and "made

every paper dollar issued to save the life of the nation equal to gold," reducing the debt by more than $750,000,000. The work of the party would not be complete till every man could vote and have his vote honestly counted. The Democratic party was controlled by Representatives of the Confederate States and the solid South was a menace to the business interests of the Country. "Is it wise," he asked, "now to hand this Government over to a party dominated by a small minority in numbers and representing less than one-tenth of the commercial, industrial, and property interests of the United States?"

An effect of the high standard of service which he had set was to make it plain to the Democratic party in New York that they could not contend against him, unless they elevated their own standard. Therefore Col. Willis, the Tammany politician, was put aside in the Eleventh District and James Watson Gerard was nominated to oppose Morton. Gerard was a lawyer of high standing, interested in public education, a man of character and talents, personally popular. He derived prestige from the fact that he was the son of James Watson Gerard, the famous philanthropist, and was a close friend of Samuel J. Tilden.

From the first, a Morton victory appeared certain, but in the interest of the presidential ticket rather than for the sake of increasing his own majority, Mr. Morton decided to make a vigorous campaign. As the campaign progressed, however, it became evident that his Congressional career was over. His services to his party, combined with his personal intimacy with its national leaders, Thomas B. Reed, ex-

President Grant, James G. Blaine, William McKinley, and the presidential nominee, James A. Garfield, had opened to him a larger career. He had become a really national figure, admittedly eligible to some one of the important posts which Garfield's election would make available.

When the Congressional election of November 2nd was over, it was found that Mr. Morton had carried his district by a majority of 3,256, a vote 2,500 ahead of that given to the Republican presidential candidate. The seat in Congress was his again; but the verdict was scarcely announced before the newspapers began to predict that his Congressional days were over. Every politician acknowledged that in the winning of the national verdict Mr. Morton had been a factor of importance, and within a week after the election President-elect Garfield wrote to him: "I congratulate you on your own handsome victory in your district, and still more over the great national victory of the party. . . . I recognize the great and effective service which you have rendered in the campaign."

From every point of view, it was evident, both to the President-elect, and to the men most closely connected with him, that a place in the Cabinet should be offered to Mr. Morton; and it was equally apparent that his long and highly successful financial career had admirably fitted him for the post of Secretary of the Treasury. William Elroy Curtis, publicist and historian, at that time on the staff of the Chicago *Inter Ocean*, after carefully testing public sentiment regarding Cabinet material, made the following report to Mr. Morton:

The Inter Ocean
CHICAGO, Nov. 23, 1880.

MY DEAR SIR:

With the motive only of doing my little toward advancing your interests I write without hesitation to ask whether you desire to go into the Cabinet, or propose as you told me last summer, to make a canvass for the Senate. I think with Senator Conkling's favor, your appointment to the Cabinet—the Treasury or the State Department—is as certain as Garfield's inauguration, and in response to an invitation extended to the readers of the *Inter Ocean* to send in their preferences for the Cabinet, we are receiving letters that will surprise you. Your appointment is advocated by people from Minnesota to Georgia. I shall print the letters—some of them—on Saturday; and will send you several copies of the paper. I have been in correspondence with General Garfield about the matter, and he is quite pleased at my idea of drawing out public sentiment, requesting that a number of copies be sent to him when the letters are published. Grant, Sherman and Logan are the only men who lead you (at this writing) in our canvass.

I hope you will feel at liberty to write me frankly, and whatever you may say will be treated with the strictest confidence.

I have written our Mr. Andrews at Washington to call upon you. Please consider him at your service.

With great respect,

I am your obedient servant,

WM. E. CURTIS.

THE HON. LEVI P. MORTON, N. Y.

A personal memorandum which Mr. Morton left on file with his private papers, confirms Mr. Curtis' statement, and indicates the very definite reason why President-elect Garfield did not feel that he could meet Mr. Morton's wishes, and his own, by appointing him Secretary of the Treasury. "During the canvass," says the memorandum, "General Garfield said to me that he would like to have me in the Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury. After his election, the Western sentiment among the Republican party seemed strongly opposed to the selection of a so-called 'Wall Street man' as Secretary of the Treasury." This sentiment, in view of the fact that A. T. Stewart had been compelled to retire from that post in President Grant's Cabinet, because he was "interested in carrying on the business of trade and commerce," certainly justified General Garfield in his refusal to place an eminent banker in the position, even though Mr. Morton proposed to give up all business connections. He, however, remained friendly, and was perfectly willing to give Mr. Morton any other Cabinet post.

Mr. Morton's second choice, however, was not a Cabinet post, but a Senatorship, and for a short time his chances seemed excellent, though they rapidly became less promising. Early in December, 1880, J. N. Matthews, Editor of the Buffalo *Morning Express*, wrote to him:

My dear Mr. Morton,

I presume you have seen Monday's *Herald* from which I clip the enclosed slip. Our last conference was of such a confidential nature that I feel at liberty

now to ask you whether any change has occurred in the situation. At that time you were in doubt whether to be a candidate for the Treasury, or for the Senate, inclining rather to the latter, and apparently in no doubt as to the preference of the Senator and his friends. . . .

The inclosed clipping was an interview with Congressman Warner Miller, dealing at length with the senatorial contest. The aspirants whose chances he dissected with praiseworthy frankness were Rogers, a Buffalo lawyer, Depew, "Dick" Crowley, Platt, and Morton; and the gist of the prophecy was Crowley's success.

It was not Crowley, however, but Thomas C. Platt, who made Mr. Morton's senatorial aspirations merely a dream; Conkling was nearing the end of his boss-ship; and Platt was the rising sun of the great New York Republican machine. Against him, master as he was already of the secret wires laid by Conkling's genius, Morton and Crowley, Depew and Rogers, singly or together, were powerless.

"To get rid of Morton as a candidate . . . in rivalry with Mr. Platt," the New York *Sun* had warned the public in September, 1880, "it is now understood that a strenuous effort is being made to have him appointed Secretary of the Treasury." But they found Garfield unexpectedly firm. He would not remove Morton from Platt's path by placing him in the Treasury Department. Anything within reason and right, he was willing to do for Morton, and to satisfy the Conkling-Platt faction; but that he would not do.

In view of the fact that he had declined the Vice Presidential nomination in deference to the wishes of his political friends in New York, Mr. Morton felt entitled to Senator Conkling's support in his race for the Senatorship. He therefore sent his Secretary with orders to place in Conkling's own hands a letter in which he demanded that Platt be asked to stand aside. Promptly, the following answer was returned:

Private.

Monday Morn.
Jany. 10, 1881.

My dear Mr. Morton:

Your secretary comes to me in a meeting of the Judiciary Com. with your note wanting an immediate answer.

Of course such haste, when I cannot withdraw from other things, does not favor satisfactory answer.

But briefly, I do not see how Mr. Platt could ask me to request you to withdraw in his favor or how I could warrantably ask it if he did: and I can see no right of mine to ask Mr. P. to withdraw, and on reflection I think you will agree to this.

I regret exceedingly the perplexity and vexation of the senatorial and cognate affairs, but it seems to me wholly inadmissible for me to attempt by my request to prevent any friend who pleases from submitting his claim to party friends.

Sincerely yours,
Roscoe Conkling.

The Honorable
L. P. Morton,
In hand.

Just what this meant was learned by Morton three days later. On January 13, the New York legislature chose Thomas C. Platt United States Senator. "Long before the roll call ended," writes Platt, "it became apparent that I was the victor." He might, doubtless, with equal truth, have added: "Long before the roll call began, it was settled by the elect that I was to be victor," for the Conkling machine had willed it: and the Conkling machine rarely willed in vain. "For I do not remember how many years," declared Elihu Root, at a later date, "Mr. Conkling was the supreme ruler of this State; the Governor did not count, the legislatures did not count; comptrollers and secretaries of state, and what not, did not count. It was what Mr. Conkling said."

Thus, by unanimous vote, "the Easy Boss" of later date became Senator, the friends of his so-called rivals, Depew, Crowley, and Morton, bowing with the rest when the order came, thus proving, as Garfield irreverently wrote to Dorsey, "that three cannot become one."

To Mr. Morton, disturbed by the rumor that he was to be asked to be content with the post of Secretary of the Navy, it now seemed best to take his plight directly to the President-elect. Accordingly, on January 17, he despatched to General Garfield, the following letter:

Confidential

Dear General Garfield:

Now that I feel that I am again a free man I can avail myself of your invitation to communicate with you.

I have lost a seat in the Senate—my great ambition —*solely* on account of the belief of the leaders in N. Y.—based upon reports of conversations with you by Senators Plumb, Dorsey, Cameron (Simon) and others that I could have the position of Secretary of the Treasury and that I ought to take it. The reasons for my belief had only been stated to one man, as I informed you, to make sure of his active efforts in the campaign—up to that time it was understood all around that I was to be the candidate for the Senate.

I reluctantly agreed to make the sacrifice of giving up business for the position, then supposing that it would be a very agreeable and satisfactory arrangement to you. Subsequent facts are known to you—our people believing, meantime, that the case would remain as it stands now, and that you would, at the request of the two Senators, Vice President, Governor and, if desired, nearly all the representatives of the legislature and New York members of Congress—make the appointment. . . . If I am to be so honored by you, I wish to feel under obligations to *you* only, and to feel entirely independent of others, for the position; and my first object then would be to contribute in every possible way to the success and continuance of your administration.

The confidential information herewith conveyed is due alike to you and myself. Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

L. P. Morton.

In this friendly presentation of the case, there appears no hint of a belief that he was entitled to the coveted post as the result of a pre-election bargain;

but Garfield proved no more responsive to this presentation than he did to the insistence of Conkling and Platt. A second letter from Mr. Morton, however, brought the following reply:

Confidential

MENTOR, O., Jany. 31, 1881.

DEAR MR. MORTON:

I have delayed answering your letters of the 17th and 21st expecting to receive the recommendation of which you spoke. But as it did not come, I waited until after the visit of Gov. Cornell and Senator Platt. I had hoped the suggestion I sent some weeks ago through Senator Dorsey would aid you in solving the embarrassment of your situation. As I told you in December, and also told Governor Cornell and Senator Platt, the suggestion they made seems to me impracticable—I shall regret it if you still think the proposal through Senator Dorsey will not be agreeable to you, and to the N. Y. delegation— Desiring to go as far as I can towards satisfying the N. Y. friends, I have written to Senator Conkling inviting him to visit me—I hope he will come; for a conference is a better mode of communication than by letter.

With kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Morton, I am

Very truly yours

J. A. GARFIELD.

HON. L. P. MORTON,
Washington, D. C.

Conkling made the suggested visit, but, writes Platt, he "came back quite as skeptical as ever of Garfield's intention to fulfill his promises."

At last, less than a week before his inauguration, the President-elect sent Mr. Morton the following proposal:

Confidential

LAWNFIELD, MENTOR, OHIO
Feb. 26, 1881.

MY DEAR SIR:

Desiring to have you associated with me in the new administration, I respectfully invite you to become the Secretary of the Navy. Awaiting your reply, I am

Very truly yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

HON. LEVI P. MORTON,
Washington, D. C.

And the same day:

Confidential

MENTOR, OHIO, Feb. 26, 1881.

DEAR MR. MORTON:

I expected you would visit Mentor, as intimated in your last letter. But the time is now so short that the cast of the cabinet must be closed.

It is necessary for me to know your decision before ten o'clock on Monday morning next. Please, therefore, send me by telegraph say the following form: "*Your suggestion approved.*"

Hoping for your favorable answer, I am

Very truly your friend,

J. A. GARFIELD.

In disregard of his personal inclinations, Mr. Morton, on February 28th, gave the suggested approval: but, after careful reconsideration, he declined the post in the following letter:

March 2, 1881.

DEAR GENERAL:

As there are embarrassments connected with my acceptance of your offer of a seat in your Cabinet as Secretary of the Navy, I desire to place the withdrawal of my acceptance of the same in your hands.

I beg you will accept my sincere thanks for the honor conferred upon me by so signal an evidence of your confidence, and believe me, with best wishes for the success of your administration,

Most resp. and truly Yours,

LEVI P. MORTON.

THE PRESIDENT-ELECT.

This decision met with strong protests from many of his friends. John A. Stewart, out of ripe experience, counselling yet another reconsideration, in these words:

Confidential

49 WALL STREET, NEW YORK.
March 3rd, 1881.

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

You did very much to elect Genl. Garfield. I think you ought to stand by him now and take the position in the Cabinet that he desires you to occupy. This is the sentiment here amongst all your friends who think more of sustaining the new administration by

having able men for the President's advisers than they do of the distribution of political patronage. I have never been very active personally in politics, but during the last thirty years I have been brought from time to time more or less in contact with politicians and have found most of them very selfish and *forgetful*. Now is your opportunity to show that you are not to be controlled by them in your actions and that you are determined to sustain the President with all your power even if in so doing you fail to meet the demands of those who in this State follow politics as a vocation. I know you will excuse my writing earnestly, for I feel that this is your opportunity, and I don't want to have you let it slip as such an opportunity seldom comes to any man more than once in his life. Moreover, I think it would strengthen the reputation of your banking house abroad to have a member in the Cabinet at Washington.

Don't make any mistake, and believe me

Very truly your friend,

JOHN A. STEWART.

Mr. Stewart's appeal to Mr. Morton's loyalty produced the desired effect. "I subsequently said to him (President-elect Garfield)," says one of Mr. Morton's Memoranda, "that I would, if he desired, accept the position of Secretary of the Navy, but that as I had been a hard-working business man, I should prefer, if agreeable to him, the post of Minister to England or France." "In a subsequent interview in Washington," he adds, ". . . He then offered me the position of Minister to France, which I ac-

cepted . . . to enter upon the duties of that office in June, 1881."

On March 11, 1881, Mr. Morton was nominated Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to France, and the nomination was promptly confirmed by the Senate. This appointment ended his personal relationship to the famous dispute between Conkling, Platt and Garfield regarding New York patronage; but it by no means ended that dispute. Despite many attempts at adjustment, the breach widened into the bitter quarrel over the Collectorship of the Port of New York, which caused Conkling and Platt to resign their seats in the Senate and to call upon the New York Legislature to vindicate them by reëlection. But, to their consternation, and to President Garfield's delight, Conkling and Platt discovered that they had miscalculated the forces against them. The New York Legislature, so often obedient to their wills, now proved disobedient and, after a conflict which lasted six weeks, elected to the vacant senatorships Warner Miller and Elbridge C. Lapham.

For Conkling it was the end of a long dictatorship in New York politics; for Platt it was the beginning of twenty years' mastery of the machine which his fellow Senator had operated; and for the new Minister preparing to enter upon his post in Paris it meant four years residence abroad during which his old dream of a seat in the United States Senate never left him. It but waited new opportunity.

CHAPTER VI

MINISTER TO FRANCE

On July 20th, 1881, Mr. Morton embarked on the French liner, *l'Amérique*, and on July 31st landed at Havre. On August 5th, General Noyes, the retiring Minister, accompanied him to the Palace of the Elysée for his first interview with President Grévy, where letters of recall were presented by the General, and the new minister's credentials were accepted. His service as Honorary Commissioner to the Paris Exposition of 1878, and his frequent business visits to French industrial and financial centers had given Mr. Morton knowledge of the conditions to be met and a certain aptitude for the tasks now confronting him.

First among these was the question of removing the Legation offices from No. 95 Rue de Chailot to some more dignified location. The importance of a change is clear from a newspaper dispatch sent, on August 26: "It must be confessed that the present office is the worst and meanest suite of rooms occupied for such a purpose by any foreign Legation in the whole city. Belgium, Japan, the South American States, etc., occupy spacious hotels, while the business of our great Republic is transacted in two third-story rooms over

a grocer's shop. . . . It is rather a trial to pass by the superb hotel belonging to the British Government . . . and to climb the steep stairs that lead to the office of the American Legation. When will the Unites States learn that '*noblesse oblige*'?"

In view of the fact that only $800 a year for rent of the Legation was allowed by Congress, it is evident, however, that previous Ministers, without Mr. Morton's private resources, should bear none of the blame for this humiliating condition. At the end of this pessimistic dispatch occurred the gloom-dispelling sentence: "As I close my letter, I learn that . . . the Secretary of the Prefecture of the Seine called on Mr. Morton just before the latter's departure for Vichy, and informed him that, as a token of sympathy for the United States and the American Minister at Paris, the Prefecture had decided to give the name 'Place des États Unis,' to the 'Place Bitche,' where the United States Legation will be installed on the 15th of October."

The report proved correct. Mr. Morton had taken a house—facing a small square off the Champs Elysée, near the Trocadero Palace—and the change of name to Place des États Unis was made, as a compliment to the new Minister of a friendly nation.

As soon as the work of equipment was started, the Minister retired to Poissy, near the forest of St. Germain, where he had secured a summer residence, called Château Champ Fleuri, a typical French country house, overlooking a wide stretch of country.

A few weeks later, came the news that on July 2 President Garfield had been struck down by the hand

of an assassin; and in early autumn came the announcement of his death, on September 19. His great office had, of course, passed at once, to the Vice President, Chester A. Arthur. As Mr. Morton prepared to return to Paris, to occupy his new Legation, he could not avoid the reflection that, had he consented to be nominated Vice President, in 1880, he might have been moving into the White House. But if he felt any regrets, the fact was hidden even from his closest friends. His sorrow was not for lost honors, but for the loss of a cherished friend.

On December 23, 1881, Judge John K. Porter wrote to Mr. Morton from Washington: "In summing up the Guiteau case which is still unfinished, and into which I was called by the President, I shall be tempted to borrow some of the eloquent words you used on the occasion of our American meeting in Paris on the 22nd of September in honor of General Garfield. As you predicted when I saw you last, President Arthur is winning the hearts and confidence of all classes, sections and parties."

The same might properly be said of the American Minister in Paris; for it became increasingly evident that a new era had opened in the representation of the United States to the French Republic. The Legation became the resort of official and influential Frenchmen, of the American colony and of American travellers. The effect of hospitality freely and intelligently dispensed, which had increased Mr. Morton's usefulness in Washington, was felt even more strongly in Paris, which is peculiarly sensitive to the social arts. No. 6 Place des États Unis became a social center in Paris, and the position of Mr. Morton

such as no American Minister had occupied for many years.

The hospitality of the legation was extended with equal cordiality to the visiting Americans and the American colony in Paris, and no consideration of partisan beliefs at home was permitted to mar the legation's welcome. Senator John B. Gordon, of Georgia, the famous Confederate Commander, and Thomas A. Hendricks, a leader among the Democrats and afterwards elected by them to the Vice Presidency, were only examples of scores of Americans whose politics were not Mr. Morton's, who sat at his board and enjoyed kindly intercourse with him. The Legation was democratic and the French liked it to be so. Thus, the Paris correspondent of London *Truth* wrote in the Spring of 1883:

"None but an American minister would have ventured to bring together Marshal and Maréchale de MacMahon, the Duke de Broglie, M. Challemel-Lacour, the Duke and Dutchess de Bisaccia, Roland Bonaparte and his sister, Jeanne; Général and Générale de Charette; M. and Mme. Jules Ferry; the Duke de Morny; and M. Tirard. In a French salon they would have formed a menagerie. In an American drawing-room they made a really happy family." To these names might have been added those of Père Hyacinthe and the Papal Nuncio! It was also a resort for the Orléans family, and the Comte and Comtesse de Paris became friends of Mr. and Mrs. Morton.

In the month of Mr. Morton's arrival the French elections had taken place and he had reported their meaning to the State Department, declaring that, in

his opinion, they had consolidated the Republic, and placed it beyond successful attack. Ninety years of perplexing experience had, he believed, developed democratic ideas into a tower of strength, and weakened the power of the opposing parties. Subsequent events have shown that the American Minister's judgment was correct. The country was solidly Republican for the first time, and the power was now in the hands of men who were neither reactionaries nor radicals.

Mr. Morton's relations with the president of France soon became friendly. Jules Grévy was then 74 years old. He had been a Deputy, President of the Chamber of Deputies,—had run the gamut of office. He was a calm, learned lawyer and a well-balanced man of affairs. Morton came into personal contact most closely, of course, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the venerable Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, then 76 years old, a great Sanscrit and Greek scholar, a translator of Aristotle, formerly a professor of Latin and Greek in the College of France, a moderate Republican. He was soon succeeded by Duclerc, a specialist in finance; then came de Freycinet, an engineer, especially interested in railways and navigation; then Challemel-Lacour, another professor and a diplomat. But the French statesman with whom Mr. Morton had the longest association was Jules Ferry, for many years president of the Council and Foreign Minister in 1883.

Mr. Morton was not a trained diplomat, but neither were any of the French statesmen, above named, Challemel-Lacour excepted. Like himself they were men of large affairs with legislative experience, and

two of them, Duclerc and de Freycinet, were interested chiefly in economic problems as was Mr. Morton.

Mr. Morton was also brought into contact with Edouard René Lefebvre de Laboulaye, perhaps the most conspicuous friend of America in France. M. de Laboulaye was president of the Franco-American Union which initiated the movement for presentation to the United States of the Statue of Liberty, the great Bartholdi statue which stands at the entrance to New York Harbor and which has done more than any single work of art to encourage the spirit of liberty. During the American Civil War, he delivered lectures in Paris on America. He also wrote a political history of the United States, and in numerous papers expounded the American theory of government which he held before his countrymen as the model for a Constitutional republic. He was furthermore one of the many French statesmen who hoped for a commercial treaty based upon reciprocity between France and the United States. When he died in May, 1883, his son promptly notified Mr. Morton of the fact, rightly conceiving that it was of peculiar interest to the American Minister. At the funeral, Mr. Morton sat with the members of the family and in the cemetery participated with the chief mourners in the last honors to this European expounder of American institutions.

In announcing the death to the State Department, May 31, 1883, Mr. Morton said. "He was a devoted friend of our country and our Government; although he had never crossed the ocean, he knew America and American history, I dare say, better than many

Americans. For more than thirty years his mind had been directed towards the institutions of the United States, and he had made himself so familiar with them, and had mastered so completely our theory of government, that he had become a recognized authority in France and in Europe upon all matters bearing upon the American system and its true relation to the great moral and philosophical principles which govern the world. Every enterprise or scheme in which our people and country were concerned found in him an unrelenting advocate and active cooperator."

Yet another French Republican must be mentioned. Louis Blanc died in December, 1882, and because of his services to the cause of free government, Mr. Morton honored his memory by attending his funeral, being the only foreign diplomat who did so. George W. Smalley commented on the fact in his letter to the New York *Tribune.*

"But Mr. Morton rightly felt that the American Republic ought to be represented when one of the foremost Republicans in Europe was laid to rest. Our Minister was at the house which Louis Blanc occupied and from which the cortège started, wrote his name in the list of mourners, followed in his carriage to the cemetery, and stood by the grave. America is well served by an Envoy who makes clear on a great occasion like this that his sympathies are those of his country and with the liberal cause and those who serve the liberal cause."

Such men as Laboulaye and Louis Blanc, enthusiasts on the subject of America, had existed in France ever since the alliance of 1778, and the American

Legation had always stood apart from the other legations. Over it hovered the spirit of Lafayette, whom Daniel Webster had appropriately called the "illustrious citizen of two hemispheres." Of no incident in their long and romantic history were Frenchmen prouder than they were of the alliance which had freed America. They liked to point to the wonder of the new world and say, "We helped to do this." It is true that the friendship between the countries had suffered disturbance on several occasions—notably in 1798 when America and France had been at war because of French spoliation of our commerce; in 1835 when Andrew Jackson threatened Louis Philippe with war over certain unsettled claims; in 1865 when Louis Napoleon was ordered to leave Mexico to her own people. These were passing irritations, however, which were quickly forgotten, while the larger remembrance of the alliance of 1778 survived. It was conspicuously emphasized, during Morton's mission, for then occurred the hundredth anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, a surrender made to Washington and the French General Rochambeau, while the French fleet under Admiral de Grasse was at anchor in the harbor. These common memories were skilfully and wisely employed by Mr. Morton to perpetuate and strengthen the traditional friendship between the two countries.

From the point of view of the success of his mission, however, his friendship with Gambetta was the most important of his personal connections in France. It opened to him avenues of approach to the Government which proved invaluable, and lasted, unbroken, until Gambetta's death, on January 1, 1883.

Mr. Morton was fortunate also in the character of the half dozen men who were associated with him in the work of the Legation. Chief among these was Henry Vignaud, a scholar of international reputation and a diplomat of ripe experience. Vignaud had been an editor in Louisiana in his early life: but in 1861 had been appointed Secretary of the Confederate diplomatic Commission in Paris. Later, as Editor of the *Memorial Diplomatique*, and then as Secretary of the Roumanian Legation in Paris, he had won distinction, and in 1874 had been made a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. In 1875, despite his earlier Confederate associations, he had been appointed Second Secretary of the American Legation in Paris. Mr. Vignaud's wisdom and experience proved of great value to Mr. Morton who lacked the technical knowledge possessed by his Secretary: and chance soon offered the Minister an opportunity to be of real service to Vignaud. In 1881, Vignaud was advanced to the honor of *Officer of the Legion of Honor*, to the alarm of certain members of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate, who demanded to know why an American diplomatic official had ventured to receive such honors without the consent of Congress. The Minister's reply was diplomatic and satisfactory. He explained that Vignaud had been made a member of the Legion of Honor before he entered the diplomatic service of the United States, in recognition of his achievements in the field of international law, and especially for his work in connection with the *Memorial Diplomatique*. The promotion to the rank of officer of the Legion, he pointed out, was not a new appointment but rather a promotion earned by

merit in the fields of international law and historical investigation.

This dispatch was a handsome tribute to real distinction. It silenced criticism and opened the way for Vignaud's merited promotion to the post of first secretary of Legation in 1882. It also marked the beginning of a friendship between the Minister and the Secretary which subsequent experiences served only to strengthen.

Of the problems bequeathed to Mr. Morton by previous ministers the most important was that of securing a better legal status for American Corporations doing business in France. For many years, these corporations had occupied a humiliating position. They were heavily taxed and they could be sued in the French courts, and judgments against them could be enforced. But if the case was reversed they were powerless. American insurance companies, banks, even the Western Union Telegraph Company, had no status before the French courts. They could not sue and had no means of bringing their debtors to terms. Furthermore, the United States was the only great power in this predicament, for corporations of other countries had been granted the same status as French companies. Until 1857 all foreign corporations had enjoyed these privileges, but in that year a law was passed curtailing the privileges of all foreign corporations, for the reason that some foreign governments did not grant reciprocal privileges to French Companies. It was provided, however, that the Council of State might grant foreign corporations French rights by special decree whenever it was deemed proper to do so. Belgium was the first coun-

try to obtain the benefits of such a decree and afterwards fourteen other countries obtained similar privileges. No serious effort was made to give this status to American corporations until 1875. In that year Mr. Homans, General Manager for Europe of the New York Life Insurance Company, urged the American Minister, Elihu B. Washburne, to make an effort in behalf of American corporations. The State Department authorized Mr. Washburne to make formal application for a decree in favor of American Corporations. The application was duly made, but the French Government wished detailed information on the subject of the laws of the United States affecting foreign corporations doing business in this country. This required information from each of the states of the Union and long delay resulted. In 1879 Secretary Evarts instructed General Noyes to reopen the question and the French Government was furnished with the laws of the several states: but the influence of rival French companies was exerted successfully to prevent action favorable to the American application.

Upon the arrival of Mr. Morton in Paris, Mr. Homans explained to him the situation and secured the immediate promise of the new Minister to use his best efforts in the endeavor to obtain justice for American corporations. Mr. Morton took up the problem energetically, urging upon the Conseil d'Etat the advisability of issuing the decree, and expressing a guarded surprise that a concession which had been granted to many European nations should be withheld from the United States. He encountered strong opposition from M. Tirard, the Minister of Com-

merce, who was influenced by the heads of many powerful French banks, insurance companies and other domestic corporations. Although the invaluable coöperation of Gambetta was secured, and favorable opinions were obtained from several successive Ministers of Foreign Affairs, little headway was made against the strong undertow of special interests. In the end, induced rather by personal influence than by argument, M. Tirard withdrew his opposition, and before Mr. Morton had been in Paris a full year, the *Conseil d'Etat* published the decree extending the benefits of legal recognition to American corporations doing business in France. The despatch to Secretary Frelinghuysen reporting this happy consummation, sent, in the absence from Paris of the Minister, by the first secretary, Mr. E. J. Brulatour, concluded as follows: "It gives me pleasure to add that the advantage now secured to American interests is entirely due to Mr. Morton. It is through his personal relations with the cabinet officers and other legal functionaries who have had the matter in charge that we have succeeded in obtaining a result which this legation has for many years endeavored to accomplish."

A second diplomatic legacy which Mr. Morton inherited was known as the "pork question," and concerned a disastrous discrimination, dating from February, 1881, against American meats. As in the case of the American corporations doing business in France, the question was one which had to be decided, not upon its merits, but in the teeth of strong and privileged domestic interests. The embargo was based ostensibly on sanitary considerations, but the popular dread of trichinosis which precipitated it had

been ingeniously exploited by breeders and other French competitors of the jeopardized American industry, and long before the interminable debates upon the subject had been concluded, it was generally understood, and sometimes openly admitted, that the matter was one of commercial rather than sanitary protection. As soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself, Mr. Morton urged upon M. Gambetta, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, the abrogation of the obnoxious decree. While a bill, introduced by the Gambetta ministry, was still before the Chamber of Deputies, another trichinosis story from Michigan excited much popular apprehension and ensured its defeat. Matters hung fire until late in 1883, at which time a strongly worded protest sent by Mr. Morton to M. Challemel-Lacour summed up in a succinct and forcible manner the injustice and unreasonableness of the discrimination against American meats, and, after exhibiting by French testimony of unimpeachable character the inoffensiveness of the prohibited meat, concluded thus: "A moment's consideration will, I trust, satisfy Your Excellency that on the ground of public health it would be much more justifiable to exclude French wines from America than it is to prohibit American meats in France. The French scientific authorities do not contend that the consumption of American meats is dangerous, while they do contend that some French wines are adulterated to an extent prejudicial to public health. . . . Your Excellency cannot be unaware that the growing dissatisfaction caused by this extraordinary discrimination, only applicable to the United States of all the countries with which France is on friendly

relations, against one of the most important products of the United States, is likely to give rise to a discussion in the Congress about to convene at Washington which might result in measures which would seriously affect Franco-American commerce in some of its important branches." The retaliatory measures thus hinted at, coupled with the persistence, urbanity, and personal influence of the American Minister, gave him a diplomatic triumph. On November 27, 1883, a decree was published rescinding the one of February 18, 1881, which had prohibited the importation of American salt pork into France. The publication of the decree caused great satisfaction in the United States, but the rejoicing was short-lived. The great influence which the American Minister had acquired over the members of the French Cabinet did not, of course, extend to the Chamber of Deputies, and there, under the leadership of M. Paul Bert, the French protectionists enjoyed their second triumph. The real cause of the opposition appears in a Paris newspaper, *Le Soleil*, which, in commenting on this reversal of the decree of the Cabinet, remarked:

"This dispute has been going on for several years. Sometimes American pork is victorious, sometimes it is vanquished. At one moment it is proscribed as dangerous; at another it is declared innocent of all the crimes with which it is charged. It is a curious fact that whichever opinion is adopted there are always men of science to defend it and as many to oppose it. M. Herisson, 'whose name is synonymous with conciliation,' defended American pork, and had cause to repent having done so. M. Paul Bert, the torturer of dogs and cats, entered the list against him.

He defeated Herisson, and reviled American pork. The majority of the Chamber thought this would be an opportunity to make a display of independence, a satisfaction in which it rarely indulges, and by a vote of 280 to 221 prohibited the importation of American pork. The Minister of Commerce had for a moment an idea of resigning, but he thought that would only gratify M. Paul Bert. In fact, if the great vivisector gave that gash, his scalpel in the Ministry, it was not from a horror of American pork, but because he had not yet digested certain proceedings of M. Jules Ferry towards him. After the vote of confidence, drawn up and moved by M. Paul Bert on the Tonquin credits, he expected to enter the Cabinet, but M. Fallières was preferred to him. If M. de Trillancourt, that famous Deputy and punster, were still in this world, he would have said: '*Ce n'est ni une question de porc ni une question de ports, c'est une question de por . . . te feuille.*' "

Another bill was introduced in the Chamber and when Mr. Morton left Paris in 1885, he stated his belief that it would pass. It failed however to do so and the question remained unsettled for six years longer. On December 11, 1891, Whitelaw Reid, then Minister to France, announced that the prohibition against American pork had at length been abolished. The exclusion had lasted ten years. It had involved negotiations with nine French Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Morton had dealt with five of them, de Freycinet, Gambetta, Fallières, Challemel-Lacour and Ferry. The nearest approach to success until the final decree had been gained by Mr. Morton in 1883.

The Minister's championship of an important

American industry was a congenial task, but when he approached the subject of the American tariff on art his difficulties were with his own Government, for he was convinced that the tariff was wrong in principle and impolitic as well. He was obliged to defend the measure in France and to dissuade the indignant artists of Paris from making reprisals which would have worked injury to American students in Paris. Nevertheless, in his letters to the Secretary of State, he protested vigorously against the action of Congress and President Arthur presented the matter to Congress in his message of 1884. Mr. Morton wrote to the State Department:

"I may be permitted to add that the increased duty on foreign objects of art, which naturally bears more heavily on French artists than on others, created here such a feeling that for a time measures of retaliation were contemplated. I do not mean that the Government had any intention of the kind, but the French artists seriously contemplated such action, and as the management of everything relating to art is to a great extent in their hands, they can, if so inclined, adopt measures very damaging to the American students in France.

"For instance, they can practically exclude them from the Government schools of art. Admission to these schools is granted upon an application of this Legation, to the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, but the rules require each applicant to state the class he wishes to join, and to do so he must secure at first the consent of the professor having the class in charge. These classes, which have at their head artists of great reputation, such as Gèrôme

and Cabanel, are always full, and it is only through the kindness and goodwill of these eminent artists that Americans obtain the privilege of entering their studios. This valuable privilege has never been denied to Americans, and when properly introduced by this Legation, it is usually extended to them in preference to all others, even to Frenchmen. It is to my personal knowledge that this practice has excited more than once the jealousy and dissatisfaction of French students and that they are now clamoring against its continuance. You will appreciate the disappointment it would be to the many young Americans who come here every year to perfect their artistic education, if they were denied admission to the great art schools of France,—now the most renowned in Europe, and where tuition is given free of charge,—upon the ground that the exceptional facilities extended to them are not recognized or in any way reciprocated by our Government.

"There is also a special occasion when the French artists can seriously injure the career of American artists residing or studying in France, and that is at the time of the annual exhibition of paintings. The exhibitions are a peculiar feature of French life. They attract immense attention, and are a source of honor and of profit to the artists whose paintings have been admitted to the *Salon*. It has been, and is still, the custom to treat in this respect American and French artists alike; that is, to give to their paintings equally good places, and to honor them with the same diplomas, medals and decorations.

"Last year, in consequence of the increased duty on works of art, this practice was strongly objected

to. Fortunately, I had a few friends upon the committee of French artists who had charge of the matter —M. Bouguereau among others—and they succeeded in preventing any change in the usual practice; but they have informed me very candidly that they hardly hope to succeed again next year, if Congress does not repeal or modify the tariff in relation to works of art.

"The facilities extended by the French Government to American students in fine arts are not confined to their admission to schools of painting, of design, of sculpture, and of architecture, but extend also to admission to the National Academy of Music, where American girls are largely represented. The managers of this great institution, which has no equal in the world, have always received most kindly the perhaps too frequent applications which I have been called upon to address to them in behalf of many of my young compatriots, and I am happy to avail myself of this occasion to put on record my appreciation of their courteous treatment.

"With these considerations, I respectfully submit to the Department whether it would not be proper to suggest a liberal modification of the clause of the tariff bearing upon works of art.

"Such modification would certainly be acknowledged by the French Government and received by the large and influential artistic circles with a feeling of warm satisfaction."

This letter did not meet the reception which it deserved. Congress did not see fit at this time to remove or even to reduce the duty on works of art. The attitude of the United States Minister was, how-

ever, so justly and warmly appreciated by those in whose defence he had written, that through his friendly relations with the Parisian Press, the artists, and the French Ministry, he was able to avert the anticipated measures of reprisal.

To the educated American of the twentieth century, international coöperation is an idea which is ever present. The needs of a commerce which has become international, force the man of affairs to form his plans with a view to the problems of an ever-narrowing world. The educator studies his problem with the lessons of many lands before him. The lawyer must think beyond the confines of mere municipal law. The public man can no longer avoid the obligation of thinking round the world. The international mind has not yet conquered in its struggle with provincialism, but it is distinctly gaining ground.

This new internationalism had, however, scarcely begun when Mr. Morton took up his work as Minister to France. Then much of what men reverenced as patriotism was dangerously akin to provincialism, not only in America, but in Europe as well.

As an international banker, Mr. Morton had been compelled to study the monetary systems of the nations with which he had dealings and had arrived at the conclusion that many of the difficulties of international commerce and exchange might be removed if the nations of the world could be made to understand the importance of greater uniformity in their currency laws. As Minister, he used his influence to bring about the international monetary conference of 1882, of which he was elected president.

This conference accomplished no far-reaching reforms, broke down no international barriers, inaugurated no millennium: but it was one of the straws showing the direction of political winds among nations, and, like the Paris Conference for the international protection of patents and trade marks which he attended the following year, it shows that as Minister to France, Mr. Morton was more than a mere American agent seeking to protect national interests. He was alert to the new movements which are now tending, ever more clearly, to produce the international mind which can think of great problems in terms as great.

The question of dual citizenship, the cause of so many international sorrows, appeared in interesting form during the early months of 1884. On January 21, Secretary of State Frelinghuysen called Mr. Morton's attention to certain papers which had been filed in the Department of State concerning one Alfred P. Jacob, of Philadelphia, an American citizen by American law, who had visited Paris, properly equipped with an American passport, and had there been seized as a French citizen and forced to do French military service. The Secretary declared his Government "aggrieved that a United States passport should have been disregarded," adding, "The least that France can do is to recognize that Jacob became a citizen by due operation of law, and strike his name off the rally."

To Mr. Morton's mind the case at once appeared to involve a conflict of laws, and to require a careful study of the meaning of the Foreign Office, with a view to having such action taken in the premises as

might appear proper, upon full inquiry into all the facts of the case, not only from the point of view of American practices, but also from the point of view of the nation declared by the Secretary of State to have been guilty of "want of respect to an American passport."

A detailed investigation of the case in question, and of the theory upon the basis of which France had acted, convinced him that there were important considerations involved which had not been in the mind of his chief when his communication had been despatched. He therefore reported that Alfred P. Jacob was the son of a French father, "being born before his father was naturalized" an American. Therefore, he was in the eye of French law a French citizen, and liable to military service. "The article [of the Code Napoleon] applicable in this instance," he added, "is the 10th which says that any child born of a Frenchman in a foreign country is French. Jacob's father was a Frenchman at the time of the birth of the son; the son is therefore a Frenchman in the eye of the French law, until a competent tribunal decides that he has renounced his national citizenship and acquired another one. In this respect, the French law, which is only an application of the principle common to all Latin races, that natural citizenship is a kind of nobility transmitted with the blood, stands in direct contradiction with the English and American principle according to which citizenship is a fact primarily determined by the place of birth. This is one of the numerous conflicts of laws existing in the legislations of friendly countries, which are tolerated from comity and for

which there is no other remedy than by special treaty."

Secretary Frelinghuysen's reply by no means altered the situation. "By our laws," he said, "he is an American citizen, his status as such dating from his father's naturalization. By French law, he is a recognized citizen through service in the Army, which only a citizen can perform. The obligation to do military duty (whether rightly due or not) having been extinguished, no precise issue remains on which the status of Mr. Jacob could be carried before a Court. To make the issue, the only available way seems to be to present the case and ask that his name be stricken off. With this explanation you may make the request. . . ."

Accordingly, on April 7, 1884, Mr. Morton wrote to M. Jules Ferry, then Foreign Secretary, and presented the request as directed, that Mr. Jacob's American citizenship be recognized and that his name be taken from the rolls in France. On May 1 came the reply: the Minister of Foreign Affairs had stated the case to the Minister of War who declared that it was legally impossible for him to comply with the request of the American Government. The Minister of Foreign Affairs therefore advised that Mr. Jacob address himself to the Minister of Justice, but declared that, pending a favorable decision from that Department, he must be held to be a Frenchman, despite the contesting views of French and American law.

So far as Alfred P. Jacob was concerned, the case had long ceased to be of practical importance. He had performed the services required of him, and it

appeared unnecessary to pursue the discussion. The principles had to be reviewed again by Mr. Morton, however, in the case of Mr. Aubury, a Frenchman who had been naturalized in New York in 1882, and with the same result; the French Government stoutly refused the American request that his name be removed from the roll of Frenchmen liable for military service.

The Secretary of Legation, Mr. Henry Vignaud, speaking with the authority of an expert, later drafted a detailed memorandum dealing with the whole problem arising from the divergent views of French and American law regarding naturalization. He called attention to the fact that France, while claiming a right to the services of children of French parentage, even if born in foreign lands, did not claim as French the children of foreign parentage, even when born in France, and urged the need of a definite adjustment of divergent laws. At his suggestion, the State Department finally decided to issue to each American citizen of French parentage whose naturalization papers had been granted at least three years before the application, a special certificate of citizenship.

The special treaty which Minister Morton suggested was never made, and in consequence, the American State Department still has to face frequent cases similar in character to that of Alfred P. Jacob. In August, 1926, no less than twenty-six were on file in the American Embassy at Paris, and the end is not yet.

Early in February, 1884, a presidential year, came to Paris rumors of changes to come in President

Arthur's cabinet, which would take Mr. Morton to Washington. *Galignani's Messenger* of February 6th, commented: "We sincerely hope that the report brought to us by the latest cablegrams from the United States that the Honorable Levi P. Morton is to be nominated Secretary of the Treasury, may not be confirmed. His services as American Minister to France have been invaluable, . . . In the long list of distinguished men who have filled the eminent position of American Minister to France, there is not one who has been more faithful and devoted to national interests and social duties than Mr. Morton. His countrymen in France are proud of the universal respect in which he is held and the regret will be deep and heartfelt if he should be recalled by President Arthur as a member of his cabinet."

At Washington, press comment and personal prediction were putting Morton even higher. Buchanan was exiled to a foreign legation, and returned to enter the White House, they said, why not Morton? One New York journal declared: "We will name for the presidency a man who would sweep the State and the Nation like a whirlwind; a man of sound sense, mature judgment and abounding talents." It then named "Levi P. Morton, and with him, for Vice President, Robert T. Lincoln, of Illinois." The New York *Herald*, after discussing the chances of Arthur, Blaine, Edmunds, Sherman, Harrison and Fresham, added: "Then there are . . . some dark horses, of whom Mr. Morton, as a New Yorker, a prominent public man, and one not at enmity with either of the Republican factions in this State, is probably the most promising."

His more intimate correspondents among men of experience, however, wisely refrained from fostering this hope. In January, in answer to a question from Mr. Morton, John Hay had written:

CLEVELAND, OHIO.
January 19, 1884.

DEAR MR. MORTON:

I have your letter of the 26th of December.

I think it would be very imprudent for me to risk my character as a prophet by giving you a prediction as to the political work of this year. After the Conventions are held I will tell you who the candidates are and make my guess as to their chances. I will tell you, confidentially, now, who is ahead in the race—it is none other than our friend Arthur. He is almost the only candidate of the office-holders and the office-seekers and they, as you know, have a good deal to say about it. Still, I do not think he will get the nomination. He cannot get the united delegation from New York and I am told by well-informed persons that he cannot get half of it. If he is nominated, we shall lose the State by a worse majority than that which defeated Folger. The other men in the field are Logan, who is working like a Turk, Gresham and Harrison who are neutralizing each other in Indiana, Edmunds, the perpetual Wayne MacVeagh candidate; and Bob Lincoln, who has no organized following but a strong though diffused sentiment for him—greatly to his annoyance as he is heartily for Arthur.

Mrs. Hay joins me in regards to Mrs. Morton, and I am,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN HAY.

This letter was a sort of opening gun of the Presidential year, 1884: and Mr. Morton was eager to return to New York and take part in a movement to nominate and elect his friend James G. Blaine: but duty held him to his post in Paris. The slow but steady progress of work upon the Statue of Liberty, soon to be presented by France to America, reminded him that he could take no leave of absence until it was duly accepted on behalf of the United States, as it was the desire of the French Committee that he should take part in the ceremony of presentation. From the beginning of his official life in Paris, Mr. Morton had been the centre of a movement by Americans living in Paris to present to the city a small bronze copy of the colossal monument. This work had brought him into close touch with the artist and the French Committee, and as American Minister had driven the first rivet into the colossal statue on October 24, 1881, an act which one of the correspondents had happily termed "riveting republics." From that time, he had been closely associated with the work of the famous French sculptor, Bartholdi, and had done much to lighten the by no means inconsiderable difficulties, incident to art's delays.

At times it had appeared likely that Mr. Morton's term of office would expire before the statue was completed: but at last, on June 28, 1884, Bartholdi declared it ready for presentation to the United States. The news was officially reported in the following dispatch from Mr. Morton to Secretary of State, Frelinghuysen: "The French Government desiring to associate itself with the undertaking of the Franco-

American Union Committee, the president of the Council proposes to join with the president of the Committee in the formal transfer of the Statue of Liberty to me as representative of the President pursuant to resolutions of Congress of February, 1877. Minister of Marine also proposes to furnish a war vessel for its transportation. Under these circumstances it appears desirable to receive instructions from you on Monday, and also appropriate telegrams to be read at ceremony fixed for the 4th of July. I shall return to Paris to attend the ceremony."

When the transfer was completed, Mr. Morton, in an official dispatch, thus described the scene:

"The ceremony was an interesting and imposing one. It took place in the foundry yard of Messrs. Gaget & Gauthier where the monument had been made, and in the presence of a large audience of distinguished guests. Upon the tribune erected in front of the colossal bronze sat the Franco-American Union Committee with its president, M. F. de Lesseps, with the author of the monument, Mr. Bartholdi, and members of the government, among whom were conspicuous the president of the Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Brisson, the president of the Supreme Court, Mr. Cazot, Admiral Peyron, Minister of Marine, Mr. Herisson, Minister of Commerce, Mr. Faillières, Minister of Public Instruction, and Colonel Lichtenstein, representative of the President. The Prefect of the Seine, the president of the City Council, Senator de Lafayette, and many other high officials and distinguished gentlemen well known for their Franco-American sympathies, were also present.

"Unfortunately, the president of the Council, who

had been ill for two or three days, could not attend the ceremony, but in the morning he wrote me to explain and apologize for his absence, and at my request M. de Lesseps read his note, which was warmly applauded for its sentiments of interest and sympathy.

"M. de Lesseps then, speaking in the name of the Union, presented to me the great statue—the eighth wonder of the world, as he called it. . . . I responded by reading your telegrams directing me to accept the statue and by explaining the action of the President and of Congress in the matter.

"At the close of these addresses, the official deed of presentation was signed by the president of the Chamber of Deputies and M. Jules Ferry, in the name of France (it was taken to the house of the latter for that purpose); by me, in the name of the United States; by M. de Lesseps and M. de Lafayette, in the name of the Committee of the Franco-American Union; and as witnesses, by many of the assistants."

The peculiar significance of the ceremony lies in the fact that the statue represented, and to countless generations will continue to represent, a popular movement. It was literally the spontaneous gift of the French people to the people of the United States, paid for by voluntary subscriptions; a generous tribute to the Liberty which France had helped to establish in the new continent.

M. Bartholdi declared, after the ceremony of presentation, that the labor of preparing the statue for shipment to America, would require at least three months: but as Mr. Morton's part in the process was now over, he obtained leave of absence and sailed

for New York, to give aid to his hard-pressed friend, James G. Blaine, who was finding his recently obscure Democratic opponent, Grover Cleveland, a man of unsuspected strength. On October 19, Blaine sent him the following urgent message which shows the candidate's then state of mind:

(*Confidential*)

South Bend, Ind.
19th October, '84.

My dear Mr. Morton:

I write you earnestly and urgently. Our National Committee cannot raise money—*you can*—I want you to take hold and do it—not simply for the cause *but for me.*

You well know upon whom you should call for coöperation.

I think Cyrus W. Field would help—ask him in my name. I beg you will do this— It will be a favor of *great magnitude* and will not be forgotten.

Hastily and most sincerely,

James G. Blaine.

Hon. L. P. Morton

P.S. Confer with Mr. Elkins. Regard this as confidential.

Mr. Morton accepted the obligation thus imposed upon him and, up to election day, rendered services which Mr. Blaine most gratefully acknowledged, even when facing the defeat which could not be avoided. On November 10th, before the trying uncertainty of a close election had made certain Blaine's defeat, Mr. Morton wrote:

Confidential

DEAR MR. BLAINE:

As one of my children is not well and Mrs. Morton is likely to be alarmed by this appearance of cholera in Paris and also for the reason that my leave of absence will be out, I must leave for Paris on the 19th.

I fear the question of the election of President will not be settled before I leave, otherwise I might be able to offer my most hearty congratulations upon your election.

I will, if agreeable, credit your account 5000 fr. as my contribution toward the expense of the canvass, as intimated when you were here.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Blaine and Margaret and all good wishes,

Believe me

Cordially and truly yours,

L. P. MORTON.

THE HONORABLE
J. G. BLAINE
Augusta, Me.

Mr. Morton returned to Paris leaving behind still another undecided contest, and one in which he was himself deeply concerned. Since his defeat for the Senatorship in 1881, he had looked forward to another attempt to realize that chief ambition of his political life. The seat of Senator Lapham was to become vacant on March 4, 1885, and Mr. Morton was a candidate for it before the New York Legislature, which was to vote on January 19.

Upon his conscience, during the days just before his

sailing, was the feeling that his candidacy might seem unfair to his friends, Chester A. Arthur and Chauncey M. Depew, both of whom were rumored to be candidates for the Lapham seat. But soon after reaching Paris, his mind was relieved by the news that neither was a candidate for the senatorship, and he accordingly wrote to his friend, William H. Vanderbilt: "I hesitated to speak to you on the subject . . . as I did not wish to antagonize Mr. Depew, but as I have just received a telegram informing me that he will not be a candidate, I venture to address you with reference to the pending election, presuming upon the friendly relations which have so long existed between us . . . I should appreciate your powerful support." In a postscript, he added: "I have written our mutual friend, J. S. Morgan, who has on several occasions voluntarily suggested my standing for the Senate, giving him the information I have received regarding Mr. Depew."

His pathway to the Senate now seemed unobstructed, and a report that Conkling had declared his prospects "excellent and improving," raised his hopes still higher; for here was expert opinion, if there is such a thing as expert political opinion in such matters. His letters, however, make it evident that the Platt connection kept him uneasy.

Again and again he cautioned against offending New York conservative sentiment. On December 12th, 1884, he wrote to Platt: "I hope my friends will be careful to avoid any action which could be criticized before or after the election—or compromise me in any way." This precaution, however, proved vain: for the business of reporters is publicity, and Platt

was a headliner whose plans called for a public understanding of his highly respectable connection with the Minister to France, the world-famous banker, the friend of Grant and Blaine, Sherman, and the fallen leader, James A. Garfield. Soon Platt's eager advocacy of the Morton candidacy made it fair game for the anti-Platt press.

At the most critical moment, furthermore, the Arthur faction advanced William M. Evarts into the contest against Morton. Evarts had a long list of distinguished services to his credit; but no personal machine, which latter fact at first seemed a source of weakness, but soon proved a source of strength, attracting to his cause eager young reformers like Theodore Roosevelt, who were weary of Albany methods and welcomed a candidate with no machine.

The contest reached the balloting point with four leading contestants, Evarts, Morton, Hiscock and Russell. On January 19th Hiscock and Russell lost courage and withdrew their names, leaving Evarts and Morton face to face before the Legislature of New York. At this point, however, the figure of Chauncey M. Depew began to loom up as a compromise candidate, causing both sides to take stock of their chances anew.

When the first trial vote in the Legislature came, it foretold Morton's defeat. Morton's friends were insisting that the ballot should be secret as in 1861 and 1867, while the Evarts men favored open voting by Legislators. The result was 28 to 64, the open ballot men carrying the day, and at the same time demonstrating their power for victory when the vote on the senatorship should follow. The ballot itself fulfilled

this prophecy. Evarts, on the first ballot, showed 61, Morton 28, Depew 3. Evarts was Senator.

Meanwhile, the electoral college chosen in November, 1884, had cast their predestined ballots, and Grover Cleveland was chosen President. At once according to long-established custom the Republican Ambassadors and Ministers tendered their resignations, Mr. Morton among them.

On March 24, 1885, twenty days after the inauguration of President Cleveland, Thomas F. Bayard, the new Secretary of State, officially informed Mr. Morton that Robert M. McLane, the new Minister appointed by President Cleveland, had been confirmed by the Senate, and a few days later, Mr. McLane reached Paris, prepared to assume the duties of his post.

Mr. Morton's final act as Minister was to preside at the ceremony of the presentation of the bronze copy of Bartholdi's Statue to the City of Paris: and his speech upon that occasion was his official farewell to France.

Immediately after the unveiling, he called upon the President of the French Republic and presented his letter of recall, which was accepted with the words: "It is with lively regret that we witness your departure; we have always appreciated your high character and great courtesy; you have won the sympathy of all, and I only wish that the customs and traditions of the two countries permitted me to ask as a favor your retention in office."

That evening, the American colony of Paris, and Mr. Morton's French friends, joined in a dinner of honor at the Hotel Continental, at which he pre-

sented his successor. The *British Morning News* best epitomized the closing scene: "The honors paid Mr. Morton yesterday were a fitting conclusion to perhaps the most successful reign ever enjoyed by an American Minister to France. It must not be supposed that the tribute offered to the departing Minister last night was the consequence of a precedent. It was, in fact, a novelty. Mr. Morton has endeared himself to the Americans in Paris as few Ministers have. His relations with the French people and with French Ministers have been undoubtedly most cordial, but it is his services to his countrymen, his encouragement to every American enterprise, his hospitality, and his fidelity to every American interest—charitable, diplomatic, and commercial—which aroused the outburst of feeling last night. Mr. Morton will carry with him to his American home the grateful remembrance of his fellow-citizens in France, and no future honors will be considered by them too lofty or too well deserved."

An even stronger tribute, was that of James G. Blaine, at whose suggestion President Garfield had appointed Mr. Morton: "I take to myself great pride for having been instrumental in sending to Paris the most successful and the most brilliant mission that has represented America since General Cass did the honors at the Court of Louis Philippe."

CHAPTER VII

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

At the time of his return from Paris, Mr. Morton was sixty-one years of age: but his public life had been compressed into seven years. Within that brief space he had served one highly successful term in Congress and had been renominated by acclamation, and triumphantly re-elected. He had taken a prominent part in the election of a President, and had served four years as Minister to France, after refusing an offer which, in view of Vice President Arthur's experience, would have meant for him almost a full term in the White House. His one great political disappointment had been his failure, in 1881 and again in 1885, to win a seat in the United States Senate, but the manner of life which he adopted after his return to New York gave no indication of a design to make another attempt. He took a house at 85 Fifth Avenue, resumed his active participation in the affairs of his bank, and devoted his leisure to his family and social life in the metropolis.

New York life, in the eighties, was quite different from the mad, impersonal rush of the present day. There was more leisure, more social intimacy and far less cosmopolitanism. The old New Yorkers, among

whom Mrs. Morton belonged by right of blood, held still a social primacy which the influx of the newly made millionaires from every section of the land had, as yet, done little to impair. The social centre of the city was still south of 42nd Street, and Fifth Avenue was its parade ground. Each Sunday morning as the returned Minister walked to divine service at Grace Church, accompanied by his entire family, his wife and five daughters, he exchanged familiar greetings with the heads of other leading families, bound in the same direction. But, while affiliated with the Episcopal Church, and a regular attendant upon its services, Mr. Morton remained at heart a Puritan, true to the strong ethical traditions which had come to America with his early Colonial ancestors. He insisted that the Sabbath for his family should be that which the Puritans had cherished, the Lord's Day, and that on that day ordinary pleasures should be as scrupulously avoided as ordinary business. Four years of Parisian life had not succeeded in converting him to "the Continental Sabbath."

The tradition of daily family prayers, however, had never been instituted in the Morton family. Upon one of his sister Electa's visits to him she, a more rigid follower of Puritan custom, suddenly confronted him with the request: "Brother, will you conduct prayers?" His children, conscious of his diffidence in such matters, watched eagerly to see how he would extricate himself from the situation. After a moment of silence, he replied: "Electa, I know you would do it better than I." It is the diplomat's duty to know how: and Electa conducted the service.

It was during these years that Mr. Morton decided

to sell his summer home at Newport, and to purchase an estate nearer New York: but he left at Newport a substantial memorial of affection for the Community which he was deserting by the purchase of a tract of twelve and a half acres adjoining what was then the Polo field, which he presented to the City and which is still known as Morton Park.

As his new summer home, he selected Ellerslie, a beautiful estate of a thousand acres which had, some two hundred years previously, formed part of the Beekman grant given to a direct ancestor of Mrs. Morton, Henry Beekman, from the Palatinate. It stands on the left bank of the Hudson River, nineteen miles north of the city of Poughkeepsie where Mrs. Morton had spent much of her girlhood. Here Mr. Morton freely indulged his fancy by the creation of a model farm. But first, the old Colonial house was pulled down to be replaced by a larger one of Elizabethan timber and stucco, designed by the then famous architect, Richard Hunt. Great barns were built, a herd of Guernseys purchased, farm lands marked out and a superintendent engaged to cultivate them according to the most approved methods of scientific agriculture. A fire, and the destruction of his herd for a time impeded progress; but another herd was purchased, other barns built, and soon the great experiment was in full operation. It was strictly scientific, and strictly costly, a fact which he accepted philosophically with the remark: "I serve milk alternately with champagne. One costs the same as the other."

Not the least alluring part of his program for Ellerslie, was the fact that the new mansion with

its ample acres would furnish for an indefinite future an attractive meeting place for his children, all still of tender years, and for possible future grandchildren. Of his six children, all born of a second marriage, one, Lewis Parsons, had died in infancy. Of the five who remained, Edith, Lena, Helen, Alice, and Mary, only two in later years contributed grandchildren, but in his old age he had the satisfaction of gathering those eleven grandchildren about him, as he had hoped.[1]

Family life alone, however, and the interest of garden and farm soon failed to satisfy him. From early youth he had devoted himself to strenuous work and long before the new house was completed he knew that the vicarious labor needed to keep his elaborate estate in operation could never be magnified into an employment sufficient to engross his attention. As his banking interests no longer required the constant, personal attention of former years, and as public life remained his chief interest, he decided, in 1886, to become a candidate before the New York Legislature for the seat in the United States Senate to which Warner Miller had been elected in 1881. This was the seat toward which Mr. Platt's own personal hopes had been long directed: but Platt did not oppose him, being shrewd enough to know that his own time was not yet.

When the New York Legislature met, in January, 1887, Platt professed full faith in Morton's election, and apparently desired it although he really preferred Frank Hiscock. The first ballot however showed Miller to be the leading candidate, the vote being Miller 44, Morton 35, Hiscock 12. Three absentees

[1] See Appendix A.

ELLERSLIE

were known to be Miller men and it was thus evident that the necessary 48 would be Miller's if he could secure one additional vote after their return. They did not return, however, and the deadlock continued. For sixteen ballots there was little change: and at last it became evident that to beat Miller, the strength of one of his opponents must be thrown to the other.

At a midnight conference on January 18, it was finally decided that the hour had come for registering, not majority opinion, but the will of the party. Mr. Morton was therefore informed that the faithful had agreed to support Hiscock as soon as Morton's name was withdrawn. This meant that his own election was considered impossible, the composition of the Legislature remaining unchanged. He therefore sought out Hiscock and said: "If my supporters regard my wishes, they will all vote for you at tonight's caucus."

When the caucus reached the psychological moment, George Z. Erwin presented a written statement declaring that Mr. Morton, in the interest of party harmony, had withdrawn his name in favor of Hiscock. The seventeenth ballot, therefore, showed Hiscock for the first time in the lead, and the zero opposite the Morton name standing as the generous cause: Miller 46, Morton 0, Hiscock 47. The next ballot carried Hiscock across the line, with 50 votes to Miller's 43.

Again Morton had lost the senatorship; but again he had shown his willingness to consider party interest ahead of mere personal ambition. By creating party dissension, he might have kept up the fight with some

hope of ultimate victory; but Republicanism in New York would have been the loser, for party faction had been to it the source of many sorrows. His calm, unembittered acceptance of his disappointment greatly strengthened his hold upon public confidence, and his defeat, under such conditions, gave him a claim upon his party in New York. The Republican press of the State generously coupled his name with almost every important national office then vacant, and leaders from other States suggested that his proper place was not the Senate, but the White House. H. Charles Ulman, of Colorado, declared that the Colorado delegation to the coming Republican National Convention of 1888, could easily be pledged, "first, last and all the time for Levi P. Morton." The suggestion seemed to Mr. Morton fantastic. He had been beaten for the Senate, an honor which he greatly desired. To dream of the Presidency would be the height of folly.

In the spring he sailed for France, resolutely turning his back upon politics, and for some months enjoyed the society of old friends in Europe. There, early in May, he received from James G. Blaine a letter which hinted at a new possibility. It was written from Florence, on April 28, 1888, and reads as follows:

DEAR MR. MORTON:

I have your favor of the 28th ulto. forwarded from Florence. We left Florence several weeks since—and have been in Naples and south of it since March 10th. We are thinking of setting our faces northward within a day or two, but I fear our projected tarry in Rome

and along the Riviera may delay our arrival in Paris beyond your sailing day.

I sincerely regret this for I would like to compare notes with you on the "situation." There appears to be considerable political confusion—but I trust out of it all harmony will be evolved and a good ticket nominated.

The tendency I think is towards a Western candidate for President. If this be so, you will have a splendid opening for V. P. if you desire it and set your New York friends to work. . . . I feel every day additional satisfaction to think I am out of it all and can be for the first time in twelve years a "looker-on." I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Crawford last night—and you may be sure *the Mortons* had frequent and honorable mention. Kindest regards to Mrs. Morton.

Sincerely,

JAMES G. BLAINE.

Mr. Morton's own plans were elastic, and he waited in Paris until Mr. Blaine arrived. The conversation which followed, left upon his mind the impression that Blaine, while unwilling to be looked upon as a candidate for the Presidency, was in a highly receptive mood, and would not be displeased to have his friend stampede the coming Convention in his favor. Mr. Morton accordingly reported to the Blaine faction in New York: "If the Convention should nominate him and then immediately adjourn, I don't think he would compel the calling of another Convention by refusing to accept the nomination."

The American press, however, too wise in the ways

of National Conventions to reckon such a development likely, speculated upon the real character of Blaine's plans. The New York *Herald* advanced the theory that Blaine's friends were really planning to "run in" some "dark horse," and "that Levi P. Morton, of New York, is the 'dark horse' whom they are secretly grooming for the nomination."

Events soon proved that Blaine's prediction of "a splendid opening for the Vice Presidency" was the true one. On May 17, 1888, the New York Republican State Convention met at Buffalo and chose Thomas C. Platt, Frank Hiscock, Warner Miller, and Chauncey M. Depew, delegates at large, to the National Convention. At one point a revolt was threatened when the anti-Platt delegates suggested the substitution of Morton in the place of Hiscock: but Morton refused the use of his name and Platt's big four were selected.

When the Republican National Convention convened at Chicago, on June 21, James G. Blaine was in Scotland visiting Andrew Carnegie; but it was soon discovered that his shadow haunted the Convention halls. True, he had telegraphed, on December 25, 1887, "my name will not be presented": but December 25 was now far in the background, and the name of James G. Blaine was presented. It mustered its full quota of 48 votes on the fifth ballot, but faded in the face of a cable from Carnegie: "Blaine immovable—Take Harrison and Phelps."

On June 25, on the eighth ballot, Harrison was chosen, having 544 of the 832 votes cast. "The nomination was made by orders from the top of Carnegie's coach," commented the New York *Sun*, of

the next day. "It took 99 delegates out of every 100 by surprise."

Deeply as Mr. Morton regretted the failure of the Blaine movement, he accepted the party decision as final and sent General Harrison the following telegram: "I congratulate the Republican party and the State of Indiana most heartily on your nomination for the Presidency."

The Carnegie cable failed when it came to the vice presidential nomination. The name of his candidate, William Walter Phelps, of New Jersey, was presented by the eloquent Senator John W. Griggs, as "the live, active, aggressive man of today," "a vote winner," and many seconding speeches followed; but the expected enthusiasm failed to appear among the delegates who held the votes.

Then Senator Warner Miller, generously forgetful of the Morton-Hiscock combination which had ended his own senatorial career only a year before, nominated Levi P. Morton. "New York came here," he said, "and sought the suffrages of this Convention for its most gifted and brilliant son. It came, bringing you assurances of victory in the Empire State, if you would name our candidate for President. But when we learned that this Convention was not likely to ratify our choice, we withdrew him . . . in sorrow but not in anger." He confidently promised for New York, unity and victory if that same candidate should be nominated for the Vice Presidency.

Henry L. Gage, of California, in seconding the nomination, declared "Levi P. Morton a man who is better loved, and can poll more votes on the far-off Pacific shores, than any other man living upon this

earth, save and except the great American Commoner, James G. Blaine."

Upon the first ballot, Mr. Morton received 592 votes, against 119 for William Walter Phelps, and 103 for William O. Bradley, of Kentucky, and was then declared the vice presidential nominee by unanimous consent. This nomination was gratifying to the men of greatest influence throughout the party. Harrison at once telegraphed, cordially: "Let me assure you that the association of your name with mine upon the ticket gives me great satisfaction." Blaine cabled: "Victory is assured." Depew's telegram ran: "It is all glorious, head and tail." George W. Child wrote: "The Convention did a wise thing in nominating you, and would have done a wiser thing in making you the head of the ticket." Elihu Root sent the following letter:

NEW YORK, June 26, 1888.

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

I heartily and joyfully congratulate you on the well deserved honor which the nomination for the Vice Presidency confers upon you. Your name will give me a personal zest in the campaign which I feared was to be wanting. It will add enthusiasm to sense of duty with a great many Republicans.

Faithfully yours,

ELIHU ROOT.

THE HONORABLE
LEVI P. MORTON

And on the same day ex-President Rutherford B. Hayes entered in his diary this prediction: "Harrison

and Morton nominations are sound politics. They are likely to be very popular and strong. Enthusiasm will begin in Indiana, a partisan State, usually close."

In the campaign which became intensive as autumn approached, Mr. Morton made no formal speeches, and his only formal declaration of principles was contained in a letter of acceptance, devoted almost exclusively to the tariff, which President Cleveland, the Democratic nominee for President, had daringly made the one dominant issue. His refusal to speak, however, was not indicative of apathy. He was conscious of the fact that he did not possess the oratorical gifts needed for platform campaigning. His talents lay in organization and personal contacts, and in these fields he contributed his full share toward the common task of winning a verdict from the nation.

General Harrison, on the other hand, was a gifted and trained speaker, well informed upon the issues of the day, and capable of pleading the cause of his party before any audience. During the early weeks of the intensive campaign of autumn he spoke frequently, so frequently indeed that on October 29, he complained: "I am quite tired of hearing my own voice, and if there was a party pledged to the prohibition of public speaking I would join it." He felt, however, that his efforts, and those of his associates, had already measurably assured a Republican victory. "I always speak of election results with reserve and conservatism," he added, in the same letter, "but the indications are all favorable to success. We are making great gains; have no substantial losses, and I think the vest-pocket vote is with us."

This cautious prophecy was fully realized. The Republican ticket was victorious, Harrison and Morton receiving 233 electoral votes as against 168 for Cleveland and Thurman, a majority of 65.

"In the interval between his election and the beginning of his administration, President-elect Harrison was confronted with the perplexing question of how the appointive offices should be distributed. Republican machines everywhere insistently demanded their portions, but the New York Republicans were insatiable, demanding payment for campaign services by appointments which included even cabinet posts. General Harrison, while willing to accept the fact that New York was entitled to a fair share of the ordinary offices to be assigned by Presidential appointment, stoutly insisted that Cabinet posts were not State matters.

Mr. Morton wisely abstained from all unnecessary participation in matters of local patronage: and six months later, when the worst of the pressure for office was over, was able to assure the President that of all the applicants from New York there had been only two in whom he had felt any personal interest whatever.

Soon after General Harrison's New York visit, Senator Hale, of Maine, asked Mr. Morton whether, in his opinion, Mr. Blaine would be offered a seat in the Cabinet. Mr. Morton replied that he had no information upon that subject: but added that, judging by statements which Mr. Blaine had made to him in Paris, he thought it unlikely that Mr. Blaine would accept any Cabinet post, preferring to return to the Senate.

"Whatever may have been Mr. Blaine's feelings and forecasting a year ago," replied Senator Hale, "and he then talked to me in Paris about it as he did to you, he is now out of line for anything but cabinet service and this of his own motion. He does not desire a seat in the Senate; therefore Mr. Frye will be returned without opposition. But the live men of the party who do the fighting in the rank and file aside from hundreds of its active leaders expect now that Mr. Blaine will be called to his old place and while I do not now speak from his inspiration, I am confident he will shirk no duty, if it is offered to him. It seems to me clear that his selection as Secy. of State will greatly strengthen the new administration with the masses of the people. I have great confidence in General Harrison's good sense in settling this matter."

Blaine's appointment as Secretary of State followed in due season, and no selection could have been more pleasing to Mr. Morton.

The question of New York's share in the remaining Cabinet posts was an embarrassing one, especially in view of General Harrison's declared belief that a President should be left free to select his advisers without reference to State lines. Ex-Senator Platt, for whatever reason, had been an effective and unswerving champion of Mr. Morton's nomination for the Vice Presidency, and Ex-Senator Warner Miller had served as his spokesman before the Convention. It was their desire, and the desire of the leading machine politicians of New York, that each should have a place in President Harrison's Cabinet. To the Vice President-elect they naturally turned for assist-

ance, and one month before inauguration day Mr. Morton wrote as follows:

85 Fifth Avenue, New York,
Feby. 4, 1889.

My dear General Harrison:

Recalling the expression in one of your letters that you wished me to "approach you with the utmost frankness about any matters which interest me or upon which I have advice to give," I write to say that if there is foundation for the reports that have appeared in the papers during the past two or three days that you entertain the idea of giving New York the Dept. of the Navy & Agriculture—with Mr. Platt in the former and Mr. Miller in the latter, this action should satisfy the Republicans of the State and prove a wise movement on your part.

I fancy both parties would accept the positions if tendered.

I fear serious trouble in the future, if any other course is decided upon.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

L. P. Morton.

General Harrison courteously intimated that the suggestion was not pleasing to him, and, on February 11, 1889, Mr. Morton suggested that the matter of the Navy Department at least be left undecided until the arrival of the President-elect in Washington. Two days later General Harrison replied:

INDPLS., Feby 13, 1889.
Private

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

I have your note of the 11th instant. It seems that I am now offered the choice of making a selection for New York without the aid of my friends in that State or of deferring the selection until I get to Washington as you suggest. I do not like the latter alternative, but it is better than the first. I shall leave for W. either on Friday, 22d, or Monday, 25th—the latter date now the more probable.

In our conference there it must be borne in mind that I cannot agree in advance that the place shall be the Navy Dept., and especially cannot agree that I will accept any man who may be agreed upon. You must suggest several names for several places, and give me some liberty of choice. Do not make the mistake of presenting *a* man for *a* place.

I have been patient, and have tried to be kind to everyone, and have thought that my New York friends ought to concede that a cabinet selection is not a State question, and that I should be given liberty in the selection.

In any conference at Washington the debate must be brief and *progressive*.

With kind regards,

Very sincerely yours,

BENJ. HARRISON.

What the character of the "brief and progressive" debate in Washington may have been remains a matter of conjecture: but when the Cabinet was an-

nounced, neither the name of Platt nor that of Warner Miller appeared.

Mr. Morton's first day as President of the Senate was passed without unusual incident: and that evening a friendly observer sent to Mrs. Morton the following note of congratulation:

March 4, '89.

The Vice Presidentess "maun be a proud woman" today, for indeed my dear Mrs. Morton, in the judgment of all observers, friends and strangers alike, the Vice President performed his part with exceptional ease, grace and completeness. If he had been a veteran in Parliamentary experience, he could not have handled the Senate more skilfully. From first to last, he bore himself wonderfully. I watched him with the most eager interest and was delighted with his bearing.

I am as always, my dear Mrs. Morton,

Your friend faithfully,

JAMES G. BLAINE.

The traditions which had surrounded the office, from the beginning, however, were not such as to inspire the imagination. John Adams, its first incumbent, had seen in it few possibilities. "My country," he wrote, soon after his election, "has, in its wisdom, contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived, or his imagination conceived: and, as I can do neither good nor evil, I must be borne away by others, and meet the common fate." John James Ingalls expressed the same idea of the office, by the words: "The Vice President

has two functions, to preside over the Senate, and to wait for the President to die." Theodore Roosevelt, in later years, after passing from the Vice Presidency into the Presidential office, once answered the insulting accusation that his aim was to become king, by the statement: "I do not want to be king. A king is a sort of permanent Vice President, and I have been Vice President."

And yet, in view of the apparent intentions of the fathers of the Constitution, this traditional insignificance of the office of second in command seems strange, especially when considered in comparison with the position of presiding office of the House of Representatives. In all but customary practice, the office of President of the United States Senate is important. The Constitution says "The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker," but the Vice President "shall be President of the Senate." In point of powers, the two were evidently meant to correspond: but the powers of the Speaker were to come to him by virtue of his position as leader of the party in control of the House, while the powers of the President of the Senate were to be his by virtue of a nation-wide election. The one was meant to be the creature of the majority in his chamber; but custom had, by March 4, 1889, made the post of Speaker great and powerful, although the creator of its maximum strength, the redoutable Thomas Brackett Reed of Maine, was still nine months from his first election as Speaker. The Presidency of the Senate, on the other hand, was frankly valued at what looked strangely like absolute zero.

To most Vice Presidents, the office had seemed to

offer little more than social distinction, and in recent years even that had fallen to a low ebb. Every one of them, furthermore—Vice President Hendricks excepted—had been a bachelor or a widower during his term of office; and Vice President Hendricks had died just before the meeting of his first Congress.

Shortly after his election, Mr. Morton bought a house on Scott Circle: but the extensive repairs and improvements not being complete when Inauguration day arrived, he went with his family to the Arlington Hotel. "The thing which made the deepest impression upon me," writes one of his children, "was the inaugural ball, when, through a misunderstanding, we five children and our governess took part in the Presidential procession through the crowded ball-room. We were allowed to go to the ball, even to the youngest, and were to have watched the scene from the balcony; but one of us misunderstood the signal my mother gave us, and the first thing her horrified eyes saw as she happened to glance backward in the ball-room, were all the Morton children, with their Swiss governess, marching in procession behind her. The sight probably spoilt her pleasure in the scene; needless to say, we had a wonderful time!

"I remember, too, some of the friends of these Washington days. There were the Blaine household. Mr. Blaine, with his great charm, apparent even to young people; Mrs. Blaine, more forbidding, but always kind. . . . Then there were Senator and Mrs. Hale, Senator Allison, Senator Aldrich, Mr. and Mrs. Hitt, Senator and Mrs. Cameron, and many others. My mother's Wednesday afternoons were great events. In those days hordes of people went from

one official house to another . . . and she used to have as many as two thousand people pass through her rooms of an afternoon. . . . All sorts of interesting people came to the house. One afternoon my mother said to me 'That is a sight to be remembered.' It was General Sherman and General Joseph E. Johnston sitting side by side on a sofa in interested talk."[1]

Meanwhile, the Vice President had fulfilled the prophecy with which Joseph H. Choate had coupled his letter of congratulation upon his election: "You will add a new series of great public services to those which you have already rendered." "I sat through a morning session of the Senate while Mr. Morton was presiding," wrote a London *Times* correspondent, on one occasion, "and I thought it quite evident that he was master not only of Parliamentary technicalities and routine procedure, but of the assembly which he administered; . . . under a demeanor which never ceased to be considerate and conciliatory, his real power as a presiding officer made itself felt."

In political matters, when conscience was not involved, Mr. Morton's firm belief in the principles of party government and majority rule caused him to act with his party. "As the constitutional presiding officer of the Senate, and chosen to that place ex-officio by the suffrages of the party which holds the majority in that body," he once said, in explaining his position, "it would be my duty to conform to the dominant wishes of that majority. The Vice President is not a Senator, nor does he exercise senatorial functions. He is Vice President of the United States,

[1] Memorandum by his daughter, Mrs. William C. Eustis.

and, by authority of the Constitution, President of the Senate. To a certain degree he is responsible for the progress of legislation, and any dilatory methods resorted to to embarrass the majority it is his duty to prevent, in such line of procedure as the majority may direct." But despite his sense of party responsibility, it was his conviction that the President of the Senate should be as impartial in his rulings as the Chief Justice of the United States presiding over the Supreme Court. To lend the dignity of his office to mere partisan tactics, was for him impossible; and it was this conviction which brought upon him the fiercest contest of his vice presidential term.

The fifty-first Congress was so evenly balanced, in both Houses, that the question of keeping a quorum was from the first vital. In the House there were 156 Democrats, 173 Republicans and 1 Independent: In the Senate, 37 Democrats and 47 Republicans. The actual working strength of the Republican majority in the House, however, was shown by the vote for Speaker, Tom Reed of Maine winning with 166 votes to 154 for John G. Carlisle of Kentucky, his Democratic opponent; while, in the Senate, the absence of a few Senators, and the refusal of others to respond to roll-call, might easily make a legal session impossible. This close balance of parties, furthermore, combined with the traditional right to sit in session and still be counted absent if refusing to respond to roll-call, gave to the minority in each house the power to block legislation which the majority desired to enact, and the determination to exercise that power was not slow in manifesting itself.

In the House, the masterful Speaker had a solution ready. He proposed to count as present every member in the Hall, quite regardless of whether or not he responded to roll-call. It was revolutionary, unprecedented, czarlike, if you will; but it made business possible. Of course in venturing upon such a ruling, Speaker Reed had to take the chance of opposition from members of his own party which, joined with Democratic opposition, might overrule his ruling; but he had confided to his friend, Elihu Root, that, in that case, he would resign from the Speakership, and from Congress, and practice law in New York.

When the critical moment came, the Speaker calmly declared: "The Chair directs the clerk to record the names of the following members present and refusing to vote." His voice was drowned in a roar of protest. One of the "gentlemen from Kentucky" rose in his wrath, shouting in his sore displeasure: "I deny your right, Mr. Speaker, to count me as present": and there was a roar of laughter to his discomfort when the Speaker answered: "The Chair is making a statement of fact, that the gentleman from Kentucky is present. Does he deny it?" At each lull in the storm of protests, he rapped out another name until all present were accounted for, and the quorum was counted.

It was the boldest move ever attempted by any Speaker to that date: and it established a landmark in the practices of Congress which both parties eventually accepted, and which the Supreme Court itself ultimately declared valid, and according to the intent of the Constitution. To this achievement, Speaker

Reed added the simple expedient of refusing to recognize any member whose purpose was to obstruct business, however loud his cries, or however quick his rise when the floor was unoccupied. By these two parliamentary inventions, he was able to control his turbulent assembly and secure action whenever action was desired by the majority.

These expedients widened, immeasurably, the already great discrepancy between the power of the Speaker of the House and that of the President of the Senate: and there was a natural presumption. on the part of Senators, that their president would readily consent to increase his power by imitating Speaker Reed's rules. The chance was offered him on December 10, 1890, when Mr. Morton ordered a roll-call to test a quorum. Senator Sherman suggestively called his attention to the fact that a quorum was present, although some were not answering to their names; and urged him to count a quorum. Without giving the least attention to the suggestion, or to the storm of protest which it called forth, Mr. Morton directed the clerk to proceed with the roll-call. Obviously, he desired to show his lack of sympathy with the Speaker's arbitrary setting aside of established rules by the operation of one masterful will. His own interpretation of duty was different: so long as the rules, made by the majority, demanded a roll-call, and justified members in refusing to answer, it was his business to enforce these rules, whether he liked them or not. If the majority cared to alter the rules, he would, with equal consistency, enforce the new ones. Calmly, but with the firmness which many had already learned to expect from this

considerate, courteous gentleman, he let it be known that it was his intention, also, to act with entire non-partisan impartiality, no matter whether the question should concern a Senator's undoubted right to refrain from voting, or his equally clear right to speak beyond the point at which his hearers ceased to desire speech from him. After this rebuff of his friend, Senator Sherman, a New York paper declared: "Hoar may weep, Aldrich may wail, Spooner and Frye tear their hair, in impotent rage, but Morton will not surrender."

Such a position was especially significant at that moment, for Mr. Morton's fellow Republicans, under the leadership of Senator Aldrich, were planning the passage of a cloture resolution to cut off debate, or to provide, as Reed humorously expressed it, "that a man who has a private balloon to inflate should hire a field." This cloture resolution was designed to pave the way for the passage of the Federal Election Bill, commonly called the Force Bill, because its manifest purpose was to force the southern States to allow to their colored population the free exercise of the franchise which the XV Amendment to the Constitution had granted them. The South had invited such a movement by the passage of grandfather clauses and other ingenious measures for the elimination of the negro vote: but the fault was not wholly with the South. The Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of Williams *vs.* Mississippi (1898), had refused to overthrow these disqualifying laws, preferring to accept the face-innocence of their disfranchising clauses at their face value, although their obvious intent was to deprive the negro of equal

franchise. Furthermore, the XIV Amendment itself provided a remedy for the situation, one Clause providing that representation should be reduced in such states as should deny suffrage to any of their male inhabitants, "being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States."

Had the desire of the promoters of the Force Bill, been merely the protection of the negro, the obvious course would have been to insist upon the application of this remedy. Their evident motive, however, was something quite different. They wished to restore the control over southern elections which had been exercised during dark days of Reconstruction; and therefore the South, and a large element of the North as well, were bitterly opposed to it as reactionary, dangerous, and certain to restore in the South the agonizing condition from which the late Confederate States had been finally released when President Hayes, in 1877, withdrew the Federal troops from South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana, the last southern States under Federal control. In the House Republican caucus, the Force Bill had passed by only one vote; but when reported to the House for action, it had commanded practically every Republican vote. It had been received in the Senate as a Republican party measure, and therefore all of the Republican Senators favored it, some with extreme reluctance, but with what they called "party patriotism." The Democratic Senators, on the other hand, had set themselves to defeat it at any cost, and every conceivable parliamentary strategy was now resorted to in this effort. Dilatory motions, unlimited speech, every device to break the quorum was

employed in an overweening eagerness to prevent the passage of the Force Bill.

As a party man, Mr. Morton may have been in sympathy with the program of his party. Had he been a Senator, he might have voted with his colleagues for cloture: but as Vice President he saw only one duty—the fair and non-partisan enforcement of the rules of the Senate as they stood. In trepidation lest he stand against their cherished plan to "choke off" debate, the Republicans suggested that he make a trip to Florida for his health, choosing the time when the cloture resolution was to be voted upon; but Mr. Morton let it be known that he purposed to preside while cloture was pending, and during the deliberations upon the Force Bill. He announced further that as Vice President he represented the whole country and was therefore not bound to execute or even to agree with the decisions of Republican caucuses. It was characteristic of him that he maintained this bold position without making personal enemies, even among the leaders of his own party whose schemes he was thus setting at naught.

There then developed another scheme of the Republican leaders, to allow a week's debate upon the proposed cloture rule, then to suggest to the Chair that the debate had already proceeded beyond reasonable limit, and demand a ruling. If the Vice President should decide that the suggestion was out of order, or that the debate had not yet run its reasonable course, they would appeal from his decision and demand an immediate vote on the ground that a motion to appeal was not debatable. The Republican

majority would then override the Chair, and the debate would have to cease.

But when the train was fired; when the appeal from the President's ruling had been made; when Senator Sherman had shouted "It is not debatable"; when the XXth rule had been read by the clerk in response to Senator Sherman's request; when the clamor pro and con had been allowed due course, the Vice President quietly announced: "the Chair is of opinion that debate is in order." And the debate continued. The recalcitrant Senators had been shortsighted enough to leave such a decision out of their calculations of the possible. The New York *World* commented: "If Vice President Morton's ruling holds, that an appeal from the decision of the Chair is debatable, the death of the Force Bill and the gag rule is only a question of time."

The next plan of Mr. Morton's opponents was to get him out of the chair and to put in his place, for the moment, a Senator who would hold that a rule to limit debate is not debatable, because the purpose of the rule would be thereby defeated; who would even go so far as to decline to see any Democratic Senator who might address him. Wild and revolutionary as the scheme was, it seemed the only one yet invented under which the gag rule could be adopted. But the difficulty there, too, was Mr. Morton. The above described Senator could not preside unless Mr. Morton could be induced to leave the Chair. This Mr. Morton had no intention of doing, and therefore, the "jig was up." "Mr. Morton," gleefully commented a Washington correspondent, while the conflict was on, "is a good

deal more of a parliamentarian than some people supposed."

For weeks, it was the aim of the leaders of the cloture resolution to get Mr. Morton out of the way: but he stuck to his chair with persistent determination, even abandoning his earlier custom of going out for luncheon. Seeing no chance of eliminating him, the "Gag Gang" sought persistently to win him, and the press abounded with headlines, "Will he yield?" "There is only one way to pass the Force Bill in the Senate," said one editorial. "It is by the application of the gag rule, and the gag rule cannot be adopted without Vice President Morton's participation in a proposed outrage upon the rights of the minority. . . . The gag rule can be adopted only by the refusal of the presiding officer of the Senate to recognize any member of the minority and by the affirmative votes of 45 Republican Senators, because no Democrat will be present when the vote is taken. . . . Will Mr. Morton take the responsibility of passing the Force Bill? Will he assume the responsibility of turning over the Democratic City of New York to the tender mercies of John I. Davenport, Deuel, and their rabble of deputy marshals? Will he give up the South to the Swaynes and Mizells? Will he establish Quay as the ruler of Pennsylvania and Dudley in Indiana? Will he resort to revolution in order to place upon the statute book a law for the overthrow of free elections by force and fraud?"

On January 10, 1891, a Washington dispatch declared: "Tomorrow, Mr. Aldrich will call up his cloture resolution, and at the same time give notice that he will ask for a vote on Thursday." It quoted

Senator Hoar as commenting: "Of course, it depends on Vice President Morton's ruling, but I feel sure that he is now with us, and will refuse to recognize anyone but the Republicans who will make the demand for the vote. If necessary, he will doubtless decide that an appeal from the decision of the Chair is not debatable, and the appeal made by any Democratic Senator will be promptly laid on the table. Then the final decision vote can be taken."

On Thursday, January 15, the Force Bill was brought before the Senate, by the casting vote of the Vice President, a circumstance which caused the radicals to foresee his complete coöperation: but their expectations were not realized. True, the cloture and the Force Bills were both now before the Senate: but the passage of the second was an essential preliminary to the passage of the first. So long as unlimited debate was allowed, the opponents of the Force Bill would continue to speak against it, thereby preventing the majority from voting for it. Senator George, of Mississippi, illustrated the resourcefulness of the obstructionists by reading into his speech an apparently interminable history of the African slave trade in America; and the obstructionists made clear the fact that a long line of equally well stocked obstructionists, awaited the hour of his exhaustion to themselves take up the task of endless speaking.

Patiently the Vice President held his place; courteously he listened or appeared to listen to the obstructionist orators, intent upon one duty—to see that the rules of the Senate were administered with scrupulous fairness. On January 22, the New Orleans *Times*

Democrat declared: "He has maintained himself in the attitude of a fearless arbiter to control the reckless passions of both parties, and to secure an unbiased hearing for both sides. . . . The reputation that Mr. Morton has won for fairness with the Democratic as well as with the Republican Senators during the past month, when the atmosphere has been heavily charged with explosives, especially when taken in comparison with the 'character' that Speaker Reed has achieved in another place with his brutal one-sidedness, and the turbulent scenes which had disgraced and are still disgracing the sittings of the House of Representatives—are an eloquent tribute to the Vice President's sense of justice, to his clear-headedness and self restraint, and in fact to his singular fitness for the elevated position which he holds. . . . If Mr. Morton will stand fast in his present practice, Mr. Aldrich's cloture resolution will certainly not pass the Senate, before high noon of the fourth of March; and the cloture resolution failing, the Force Bill collapses along with it."

Thus, from January 20 to January 26, the pro-Force Bill Senators and the anti-Force Bill Senators debated, declaimed, denounced, and jockeyed for position, and it began to be evident that the more urgent legislative measures would remain unpassed on March 4 unless the cloture and the Force Bill were abandoned. Therefore when, on January 26, Senator Wolcott, of Colorado, moved to consider a bill apportioning representatives in Congress, thirty-five Senators voted "yes" and only thirty-four voted "no." The vote was the test of whether the Force Bill and its accompanying cloture should be aban-

doned; and the victory of 35 to 34 meant the end of the long conflict.

And so the Force Bill was beaten, largely because the President of the Senate could not be shaken from his determination faithfully to enforce the rules of the Senate and see a fair deal given to friend and opponent alike. Its passage had proved impossible unless some means could be devised to stop the obstruction which the Senate rules made so easy. Senator Spooner, acknowledged leader of the friends of the election law in the Senate, said to some of his associates: "The Vice President tells me he will firmly enforce any rule we adopt to reach a vote. He could not, under the rules, cut off debate now if he wanted to do so, and if we expect him to terminate debate, we must give him the authority."

In view of such facts, whatever view we may now take of the Force Bill, it was manifestly unfair for the friends of the measure to hold him responsible for its defeat. But the desire to secure the passage of the bill was very intense among them, and their disappointment was great that the President of the Senate refused to give them what appeared to him lawless assistance.

In view of the striking contrast between Reed's methods in the House, and Morton's methods in the Senate, the question inevitably arises: "Which was right?" The answer must be given in the words of one of the fathers of historical literature: "I judge not: I only narrate."

As the Convention of 1892 approached, some of Mr. Morton's friends, not too wisely, let it be known that they thought him a possible candidate for the

presidency; but they failed to back up their opinion by an organization strong enough to fight for his nomination either for that office, or for the vice presidency. On March 30, C. N. Bliss wrote, apparently in simple faith that the latter nomination was his without effort:

117 DUANE STREET
NEW YORK.

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

I have your favor of yesterday. It is a little difficult to reply definitely. There has been so much apparent indifference as to the presidential nomination, and such varying opinions regarding it, owing to the uncertain temper of our political friends, of both factions in the State, that not very much has been said within my knowledge as to the candidate for Vice President. Within a week or ten days past, however, the air has seemed to clear somewhat, and New York support for the renomination of the President seems to be more than probable. In this connection the suggestion of the old ticket, Harrison and Morton, is very frequently heard, and I think there can be little doubt, that, assuming the nomination of President Harrison, your nomination for Vice President would be heartily supported in New York. A disturbing element in the hitherto harmonious and sure 11th Assembly district of this city is supposed by some to have reference to the possible candidacy of Mr. Reid (Whitelaw) for Vice President. I do not suppose for a moment that Mr. Reid has knowledge of or would approve the conduct of his supercilious employee, Mr. Milholland, but I notice that in the latter's recent "raid" upon the district that

he had the *apparent* support of the publisher and city editor of the *Tribune*, as well as of one or two unconditional Blaine men. I wrote to Secretary Foster, that, in my opinion Mr. Milholland ought to be removed from the Government service, and I believe his case is under consideration. Opinions must crystallize soon now, and anything coming to my knowledge that may be of interest to you, I shall be pleased to communicate. I need not say that I shall personally be glad to see you continued for another term in the position you have filled with such dignity and ability.

Sincerely yours,

C. N. Bliss.

The Honorable
L. P. Morton,
Vice President.

As should have been apparent from this letter, the renomination of Mr. Morton was not to be unopposed, and the warning with reference to Whitelaw Reid's friends, should have aroused Mr. Morton and his friends to immediate action. General Harrison was clearly disposed to favor the old ticket, and would doubtless have welcomed activity in the Morton camp: but it did not appear. Instead, it became known that the Vice President considered the question of renomination to be one which should be left to the party Convention uninfluenced by clamor or interference from the man in office. This was a dignified position, but one easily susceptible of the interpretation, later placed upon it by the friends of the rival candidates, that Mr. Morton did not desire to be renominated. Every politician understands

that leadership requires effort, and the man who refuses to make the effort toys with destiny.

In Vice President Morton's case there was added to the ambition of rival candidates, the indignation of those Republicans whose cherished scheme for "safe elections" had been defeated by his refusal to "play the game." The friends of the Force Bill were ready enough to accept as fact the unfounded rumor that the Vice President had voluntarily taken himself out of the race; but there seems no reason to believe that they had determined to oppose him openly in the Convention and to cast their influence for Whitelaw Reid.

When the Republican National Convention met at Minneapolis, on June 7, 1892, Harrison was selected as presidential candidate to meet the returning Democratic leader, Grover Cleveland, whom the Chicago Convention nominated two weeks later. Vice President Morton, without previous warning, was passed over in favor of Whitelaw Reid; a change which the *Daily Evening Times* interpreted to mean that "the Republican party has committed hari kari."

Mr. Morton received the news of his defeat calmly, and without the least appearance of resentment, deep as was his sense of injustice. A Cincinnati correspondent who sat with him when the report of the balloting was coming in, later declared: "I observed Mr. Morton when the dispatch came giving the substitution of another candidate. He showed no kind of impression, neither care nor don't care. His countenance was absolutely imperturbable, suggesting that the occurrence concerned somebody else, unknown to him."

His friends, however, responded with indignation, voicing in editorials, addresses, and resolutions, their sense of the injustice done, not only to the man but to the party: "Not a single adverse criticism of Levi P. Morton has ever appeared in any Republican newspaper in the United States—so far as we know"; declared one Editor. "Not a prominent Republican of this country is as highly esteemed by the Democrats as is our present worthy Vice President. . . . He has never descended to the commission of an unmanly act in order to win political preferment for himself or political victory for his party. For these reasons his recent overthrow constitutes an act of the basest ingratitude. . . ." "The unutterable folly and ingratitude of the Minneapolis Convention," said another, "rendered Mr. Morton's return to Washington as Vice President an impossibility. To what extent it has brought the party into public contempt and reprobation can only be conjectured. But no act of any party or Convention can take from those who have known him best and seen him most nearly, their pleasant memory of the years he spent among them. Irrespective of political association, they will follow him with their warmest wishes, their most affectionate solicitude."

"I have heard but one voice in the Senate in regard to it," wrote Senator Proctor of Vermont, on June 18, "and from both parties a universal expression of regret in which I join most heartily." With "every claim to a renomination that Mr. Harrison had, and some that the President could hardly pretend to," as the New York *Times* later declared, "Vice President Morton has been denied renomination."

Mr. Reid hastened to assure Mr. Morton that he was not himself responsible, for the substitution. "I expected your renomination and reëlection," he said in a letter of July 2, and "my prediction would have come true, too, if you had not been quoted as saying you did not want it."

By degrees the facts were brought together. General Horace Porter, Chairman of the meeting at which the decision was made, wrote, on July 13: ". . . . Harrison's nomination was made before four o'clock in the afternoon, and while the noise of the boom which followed was going on, several of the New York delegation said, 'Let us hold a convention and nominate a vice president. If we wait until evening, there will be no convention here, so many members want to leave town on the evening train.' It was generally understood that I was to nominate or second the nomination of the vice president in a speech of some length, it being taken for granted that New York would have the vice president. There seemed to be a feeling that the old ticket would be renominated. Just then Spooner moved an adjournment until eight o'clock in the evening, which was carried. Word was then passed around that the New York delegation would have a meeting at seven o'clock to consider the nomination of vice president.

"We got our dinners and repaired to the room of the delegation, and I was called to the chair, Warner Miller having left town. It was suggested by some that no vice president had ever been renominated with his president. A number of persons suggested Reid's name, although I really do not think from all the information I can get that Reid urged his nomi-

nation upon any member of the delegation, or said much of anything about it. Milholland brought in the president of the New York Typographical Union, who made a statement and put it in writing to the effect that their differences had all been settled satisfactorily with Reid, and that they were then very friendly to him. Then Mr. Mase, I think it was he, said something to the effect that you did not wish the renomination. There were about sixty out of the seventy-two delegates at the caucus. The discussion lasted fifty minutes. A number of the most prominent people in the delegation favored Reid in short speeches. Ten minutes before the convening of the convention, I put the motion which had been made for Reid's nomination, and it was carried unanimously. Senator O'Connor was then elected chairman of the delegation in place of Warner Miller, and instructed to present Reid's name to the convention. About everyone that spoke took occasion to make the most flattering remarks about you, and in praise of your services.

The first time we have a chance to sit down and talk the matter over, I will tell you as much in detail as I can recollect of the proceedings; but the above is substantially the history of the matter.

Yours very truly,

HORACE PORTER.

P.S. All this is, of course, only for your own eye.

A little more light is thrown upon the incident by a letter written by Senator Spooner, a Wisconsin delegate, soon after the Convention adjourned:

HUDSON, WIS., June 29, 1892.

HON. LEVI P. MORTON
Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

You probably know that I was a delegate from this State to the Minneapolis Convention. *I want you to know* that I was earnestly and persistently in favor of your renomination as Vice Prest., and if it had been left to the Convention without the influence of the New York delegation your support would have been in my judgment overwhelming. I talked with many leading men in different delegations and they were without an exception in favor of your renomination. Those with whom I had been especially associated in the fight for the renomination of the President favored the "old ticket." It was left to New York, and I did what I could with the New York men whom I could reach, but I was informed that the "Platt Contingent" was for Reid and that it must go that way. It is due to Hiscock that I should say that he seemed to agree with me that you ought to be renominated, but said he was powerless. It was difficult to prevent open opposition to Reid for certain reasons. If you labor under the impression that the Convention was indifferent to you it is a mistake. The motives and policy of the New York delegation you doubtless understand. I confess that I do not.

I do not know that you desired or would have accepted a renomination, but it would grieve me to have you, for whom I entertain not only sincere respect but warm friendship, think that I could under such circumstances fail to be for you. I think your

nomination would have strengthened the ticket. You have discharged your duties with admirable tact and ability, and the old ticket would have had the prestige of success, which counts for much. I have supposed since the Convention that the report that you did not desire a renomination which was so sedulously circulated throughout the country sometime ago, was of sinister purpose. Mrs. Spooner joins me in good wishes for Mrs. Morton and yourself.

Yours sincerely,

Personal JOHN C. SPOONER.

The election fulfilled the prediction. The Washington *Post* of November 9, 1892, thus summed up the result:

"Mr. Cleveland wins: Mr. Harrison loses. The conditions of 1888 are reversed. The gentleman from New York and the gentleman from Indiana will accompany each other to the Capitol again on the 4th of March next, but in changed relations from those of four years ago. Such is the voice of the people as expressed at the polls. . . . The misfortune which has overtaken Mr. Harrison . . . may . . . be ascribed in no small measure to the fact that he was disastrously handicapped by the action of the Minneapolis Convention in ignoring Mr. Morton who would have added immensely to the strength of the ticket, especially in New York and other doubtful sections of the East. A Western paper answered thus the universal question: "Why was Vice President Morton not renominated?" "Because God was good to him."

Fourteen days before the inauguration of his

Democratic successor, Adlai E. Stevenson, Mr. Morton received the following letter, bearing the signature of every member of the Senate over which he had presided, and those of its Secretary and Sergeant-at-arms:

UNITED STATES SENATE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
February 16th, 1893.

THE HONORABLE LEVI P. MORTON, VICE PRESIDENT

SIR:

The discharge of the important duties incident to your great office as President of the Senate of the United States for the last four years, has brought us in close association with you.

Your constant fairness and signal ability have commanded our respect and confidence, and your uniform courtesy and unvarying kindness have won our regard and personal affection.

Desiring to evidence our kindly feeling toward you, we take great pleasure in tendering you a banquet at the Arlington Hotel in this city, on the 27th instant, at 8 o'clock.

SIGNED.....

At the banquet, when the hour for the speaking arrived, the toastmaster, President *pro tempore* of the Senate, Senator Manderson, pointed to the fact that "in the history of the country this is the first instance where the Vice President about to retire to private life has been thus complimented by those who have been his associates in the Senate of the United States." And the thirty-five years which have since

elapsed have also failed to produce a second instance. Senator Hale eulogized Mr. Morton as one who had had the patience to listen to "something more than 475 morning prayers, and to the unpremeditated art of seventy or more Senatorial funeral eulogies."!—For others, he said, there is the refuge of the cloak-room, but for the Vice President "there is nothing to do but to sit and take it."! Thus, he added, it is evident that "the Vice President is the worst practiced upon man in all the United States. (But) in all the qualities of a presiding officer . . . none can surpass him. As the years go by and as other actors come upon the scene, we shall turn affectionately to his memory."

The day following the banquet, a Southern editorial commented: "Harrison and Reid were defeated and Mr. Morton shed no tears. . . . Now the Senators have banqueted him in fine style, and Democrats and Republicans alike have joined in saying many fine things of him. He goes out of office gloriously. The Southern people have a warm spot in their hearts for Mr. Morton, because he would never agree to act the part of Tom Reed in his great office of Vice President, when the Harrison wing of the Republican party wished to shove the Force Bill through the Senate. That courageous act probably lost Mr. Morton the nomination, but it placed him in his present dignified, honorable, and respected position." And on March 2, 1893, William McKinley, then Governor of Ohio, wrote to him: "You go out of office, not only with great honors, but with the love and confidence of all the country."

On March 4, Mr. Morton presided over the Senate for the last time, made his brief, formal farewell, and

then called upon Vice President-elect, Stevenson, to subscribe to the oath of office. This ceremony concluded, he took official leave with the announcement: "The Chair declares the Senate adjourned *sine die*."

He left the Capitol with the words: "My public career is over"; but in this he was mistaken. Already he was the center of the thoughts of watchful political leaders in New York who saw in him ideal material for Republican gubernatorial candidate in 1894. And that was not half their dream. Entrenched in the position of Governor of New York, he was to them the logical candidate for the presidency in 1896.

CHAPTER VIII

GOVERNOR MORTON AND CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

Upon leaving Washington, Mr. Morton returned to business, and to the work of beautifying his estate at Ellerslie; while the press of many sections took up the vision of the New York *World* which had predicted that he would be the next Republican nominee for President. "It is to Mr. Morton," declared a New England paper, "that the more sane and conservative members of his party are now looking to lead them out of their 'hole'. . . . They propose to pave the way for his nomination in 1896, by making him Governor of New York in 1894. . . . We have the solid and substantial business men, the banker element, and the older leaders, who never really approved the McKinley lunacy, and who know that McKinleyism is permanent political death for the Republican party. They see in Mr. Morton the most capable and available man to lead the party, and they are right. If they can succeed in making him Governor there next year, he will be strongly placed for the nomination in 1896."

For some time Mr. Morton's own thoughts were given to business, and to the problems of harvesting his crops: but the political prophecies continued

and in time he listened, but with ears which discounted the enthusiasm of friends. He had seen too much of politics to suppose that such offices would come without a struggle, and he was in no humor for political contest. The call of old friends, old cities, old places was coming to him from the other side of the Atlantic. Ellerslie was restful, but he desired a different kind of rest. In August, 1893, he sailed with his family, for Europe, with no definite plans. In England, in France, in Italy, and in other lands were friends whom he wished to see, and places which haunted his memory; while the social life of each of these countries offered attractions which some of his daughters were now old enough to enjoy and which still appealed to him, despite advancing years. Thus from London to Paris, from Paris to Rome; from the country seats of English friends to those of other friends in other lands they passed as the seasons progressed, living once more the life of earlier, diplomatic days.

During all these months of joyous wandering, there came to him, from time to time, news from the political front in New York where his friends still planned his nomination for the governorship. His replies, always prompt and courteous, were invariably noncommittal. The bait of the Presidential nomination in 1896, attracted him little: for he was disposed to doubt his ability to meet its burdensome responsibilities even in the event of the thousandth chance.

On May 9, 1894, George H. Sharpe, of the Board of United States General Appraisers, wrote:

"In going to your banking house lately to get a draft to send abroad I was told that you might not

return until autumn. This of course led me to believe that you were not willing to consider any of the suggestions that I knew had been made in the public prints here, and I thought had been probably made you.

"Early in the year when it became probable that we should have Republican success generally throughout the country this fall, there were a number of gentlemen spoken of with reference to the office of Governor. It was understood that Mr. Platt would have his candidate, and I think it was generally believed that, if he felt entirely sure of nomination and election, he would nominate Mr. Fassett. Failing this it was understood that he had a second and a third choice. Those who would not follow his suggestions implicitly believed that it was time for the candidate to come from New York City, and Mr. Cornelius N. Bliss has been talked about a good deal; so also has Mr. Elihu Root. Knowing them both pretty well, the latter especially, I believe that Mr. Root, would, in no event, be a candidate, and I also believe that, while Mr. Bliss is very modest about it, he might be a candidate. Since then there have been numerous candidates presented by themselves or their friends from all over the State . . .

". . . Having in this hurried way put some other things aside so as to clear the field, I want to say with absolute frankness and without the slightest tinge of personal feeling in regard to it, but simply as a matter of cool judgment from all that I have seen and heard, that if you were here on the ground, going about your affairs and simply taking care of yourself, you would be nominated and elected, I was almost

going to say, by acclamation. The feeling in regard to your treatment at the National Convention would, I am assured from many quarters, make Republicans anxious to do some striking thing to evidence their feeling. . . . Unless you are here advantage will be taken of your absence to nominate someone else."

Up to this point the letter was written by a typewriter: but at the end this warning, "a word I would not dictate to anyone," is added in Mr. Sharpe's own hand: "There has been a careful interchange of opinion among high-toned and independent Republican leaders throughout the State, with all of which I am familiar, and it is thought quite certain that Mr. Platt will not control the State Convention, and that no candidate of his will be nominated."

Mr. Platt shared the opinions thus expressed, in so far as the wisdom of cautious methods on Morton's part was concerned: but he differed with Mr. Sharpe and his reformer friends as to the Platt influence in the coming State Convention. His machine, like most effective machines, worked silently, its fuel being employed to generate power not publicity. He knew as well as Mr. Sharpe, or any other anti-machine man, that Levi P. Morton was the most available man for Governor; but he understood far better than they how to make political capital of that knowledge. And, in view of the suspicions concerning his actions at the Minneapolis Convention of 1892, supercaution was necessary if this most available candidate was to march to the Governorship under the banner of orthodox New York Republicanism of which Platt was now high priest. In a recent friendly letter, asking for political information, Mr.

Morton had made an opening which the "Easy Boss" skilfully followed up. On the very day when Sharpe was writing to Morton of Platt's powerlessness, Platt was preparing for the same reader the following letter:

Private

United States Express Co.,
Office of the President,
49 Broadway, New York.
May 9th, 1894.

My Dear Mr. Morton:

Your letter of the 27th ult. is here and I am glad to know that your health is good, your mind serene and that you are once more "taking notice" of the politics of your country.

As to "newspaper talk about your nomination," you must ask me something easier. Their talk (is) a part of the general gossip and speculation. Candidates are numerous and there promises to be a lively scramble for the nomination. Any man who is understood to be a candidate favored by me will have the field against him. I hardly know what to suggest or advise. I have refrained from even writing to you on this subject for fear you might be handicapped if you concluded to be a candidate. I have thought this, that if you kept in the background, perhaps when the scramble culminated you might be a natural compromise candidate, free from factional alliances and having particular elements of strength with the people. You know very well where my personal feelings and leanings will tend—I expect to be a factor in the next State convention and there will be many men elected as delegates who will prefer you to all others. I am perfectly free from all en-

tanglements and would be glad to hear from you further. I shall keep our correspondence *strictly* confidential.

Yours sincerely,

T. C. PLATT.

Mr. Morton made as usual a courteous and friendly reply to this communication, carefully refraining, however, from a commitment, as he was as yet by no means certain that he desired to be Governor, even if it could be accomplished by merely keeping in the background as Platt suggested. But Platt, without displaying undue eagerness for the Morton candidacy exercised his customary due diligence in sounding public opinion. "I asked leaders everywhere," he says in his *Autobiography*, "to give me their unbiased views as to who, as candidate for Governor, would best ensure the reinstatement of the party in power. So pronounced was the sentiment for Levi P. Morton that in the summer I publicly declared him my choice." A subsequent canvass of the 35 members of the Republican State Committee showed Platt's political shrewdness: for 16 committed themselves to Morton as their first choice; and by July 26, it was felt that there was not the slightest doubt that Levi P. Morton would be the Republican candidate for Governor.

As soon as he felt certain that the adoption of Morton was the wise move for the strangely concentrated organization known as New York Republicanism, and before this public announcement, Platt sent the ex-Vice President the following letter of praiseworthy frankness, on the surface:

THE ORIENTAL, MANHATTAN BEACH, LONG ISLAND.
July 29th, '94.

MY DEAR MR. MORTON:

I have yours of the 18th inst. Your previous letter of July 8th was recd. and answered by me, but stupidly was directed to you at Hamburg and I fear it may not reach you. If it failed to connect please see if you can hunt it up for it would not be good general reading. Since I wrote you, sentiment has developed fast and there seems to be little doubt but what if you conclude to accept you will be nominated by acclamation. Do not be deceived or discouraged by the statements of interested parties now visiting in Europe.

The meeting of the State Committee last week was largely attended by outsiders as well as by every member of the Committee in person and I speak within bounds when I say that three-quarters of those present were outspoken for you. It is conceded that if you are willing, yours will be the only name to go before the Convention and there is no doubt but what you *will be triumphantly elected.*

As I wrote in a previous letter, as Governor you would have to be present in Albany all the time during the session of the Legislature, except that you could run away (as Flower has done) every Friday and stay till Tuesday. The rest of the year you could act your own pleasure. If you employ (as you should) an able private secretary your labors could be made very light and you could spend much time in New York or Rhinecliff. If your health is restored I do not see how you can resist this honor coming as it will unsolicited. I hope you will accept. Up

to this time the very wisest course has been pursued to bring about the desired result. Others, anxious aspirants . . . have been very busy in circulating unfavorable reports as to your physical condition. These have been scotched promptly and have had no effect.

It is more certain than ever that my friends will be in a large majority in the Convention.

It has been called for Tuesday, Sept. 18, so that there will be ample time after your arrival, Aug. 25, for deliberation and determination.

Depew is not a candidate, so he assured me before he sailed for Europe. If he had any such intention he would have pursued a different plan up to date. Flower will be nominated if he will take it. He has not decided, I suppose is waiting to see how matters may shape and what the chances are.

Yours faithfully,

T. C. Platt.

From this singularly lucid and luminous letter, the following facts are evident: Platt was now certain that the ex-Vice President could win: he believed that the office would look more attractive to Morton if made to appear little laborious: and, finally, should Morton accept on these terms, and take his ease, the Republican organization, alias Thomas C. Platt, would be left free to run the State. Had he taken the precaution to study his candidate's past record, however, he would have known that never in his life had Levi P. Morton allowed another man to carry the burdens which were his. In consenting to become Governor, if habit means anything and

trained conscience counts, Mr. Morton would certainly insist upon making his own decisions. One of Tom Reed's wise sayings applies here: "If the proposition is to press an oak back into an acorn, it had better be carefully considered."

But Mr. Morton was not yet willing to make the decision which would throw him back into the maelstrom of politics from which he had so lately been released. He was seventy years of age. He had won the right to a placid life. Did he desire to return to the turmoil of politics?

Before he had decided upon the answer to that question, combined business and pleasure called him to London. Thither a staff correspondent of the New York *Mail and Express* followed him, with instructions to "ride home with the Governor." When he presented himself and explained his mission, Mr. Morton exclaimed: "You don't mean to say that you have come this great distance for that one purpose!" "Those are my only instructions from the *Mail and Express*," was the reply. . . . "The Republicans of New York are quite anxious to know whether you would accept the nomination for Governor next month, if it should be tendered with practical unanimity." After a few moments' thought, Mr. Morton said: "A gentleman who has come so far as you have to ask that question, is entitled to a frank answer, and I should be glad to give it to you if I knew myself what answer to make . . . I have no desire or inclination to re-enter public life."

But with contemplation came desire, and when *La Normandie* docked in New York on August 26, Mr. Morton met the reporters with a smile which the

New York *Times* next day interpreted in the headline: "Morton will consider." What he had said was simply: "I am going home to Ellerslie at once, and shall have nothing further to say for publication for a week at least." His close friends, however, knew his mind and counted upon his acceptance. On August 27, Joseph H. Choate wrote to his wife from Albany: "I am so delighted to see that Mr. Morton has come home in good health and spirits and ready to run for Governor. It will get me clear out of it, to my great delight."

Within the week designated, his decision was given to the press in the form of a letter which declared: "I appreciate the importance of the great office of Chief Executive [and], should I be called to fill it, I shall strive earnestly to serve the people with steadfastness of purpose, and faithfully to administer a public trust."

This was a frank announcement of candidacy and the response throughout the State was a certain symbol of success in the Convention. On September 14, the New York *Press* reported, "More than 100 of the 127 delegates from New York City . . . will vote for the nomination of Levi P. Morton." Two days later, the New York *Herald* ventured upon a prediction, based upon a careful study of the delegates: "There will be 732 votes in the Convention. Apparently it will be impossible for any combination to be made which will prevent Mr. Morton's nomination on the first ballot, if Mr. Platt decides it shall be made on that ballot"; and the *Tribune* of the same date prophesied that Mr. Morton would be "nominated by acclamation."

On September 21, the necessary preliminaries having been disposed of, General Benjamin F. Tracy presented the name of Mr. Morton with the words, "Republicans are coming back to power in 1896 and are coming back to stay."

The roll call justified the hopes of Mr. Morton's most sanguine sponsors. Before Ontario was reached he had votes enough to nominate; and at the end, the clerks announced:

"Morton, 532½; Fassett, 69; Woodford, 40; Butterfield, 29; Russell, 20; Bliss, 39½; and Arkell, 1." The nomination was then declared unanimous; and with the nomination of Charles T. Saxton for Lieutenant Governor, and Albert S. Haight for Judge of the Court of Appeals, the work of selection was over. Soon the State was resounding with the campaign song:

> "With a round hundred thousand majority straight,
> For Levi P. Morton, and Saxton and Haight."

It was not a Platt-bossed movement. Platt had simply sounded public opinion and, in the manner of a shrewd politician, had named the winner as his candidate.

The Democratic State Convention met at Saratoga on September 24, and nominated David B. Hill for Governor, Daniel N. Lockwood for Lieutenant Governor, and William J. Gaynor for Judge of the Court of Appeals. This news was received by Republicans with the words: "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands." Hill's record, his

connections, his political methods were felt to be such that Morton's victory was assured by the very choice of his opponent. But Hill's backers saw in his nomination a pathway leading to the nomination of 1896, and were determined to win the Governorship. Thus each party sought to make a Governor, that a President might be made.

In the absence of legitimate points of attack upon Mr. Morton's character or record, his wealth served its old purpose: but not too well, as the fair-minded American has never tended to scorn a man who has won fortune by honest and effective business methods, and the public of both parties knew in their hearts that Mr. Morton's fortune had been honestly won. In desperation, as election day approached, the Democrats arranged to have Mr. Morton's imported English coachman arrested as one brought to America in flagrant violation of the contract labor law; and Democratic cartoonists never tired of studies of Governor Morton, preferring foreign labor to the sturdy sons of his own native soil. Mr. Morton, however, succeeded in convincing even the reluctant Democratic Secretary of the Treasury, Carlisle, that the law had not been violated, and the coachman was released from custody.

In view of the prize, it was astonishing to friend and foe alike to find that Mr. Morton would do little campaigning in his own interest, preferring, as he confidently asserted, to save all his strength for the duties of Governor. And he won without campaigning. His plurality was 156,108, a victory never equalled before or since in any non-presidential year, save only the victory of Grover Cleveland in 1882.

For the first time in history, both the State and the City of New York were carried by the Republican party and the victory was the more surprising in view of the fact that Morton won by 74,045 against, not Hill alone, but five competitors, Democrat, Prohibitionist, Populist, Socialist, and Independent Democrat. "This," remarked the Rochester *Union Advertiser*, "is not only a tremendous upheaval, but is an evidence of the extraordinary popularity of this aged statesman which has made the Republicans throughout the Union fully understand that there is one man in this Commonwealth who can carry 'the pivotal State' of the Union in 1896 by a majority so vast that his nomination would at once determine who will be the next President of the United States." Moreover, it was not, as Democratic papers had so freely predicted, a "victory for the Morton barrel," for the statement which he filed with the Secretary of State on November 12, showed expenses as follows:

"To the Republican State Committee (of which amount $2,500 was at my request paid to the New York County Committee) $16,000; to L. H. Vail, member of the State Committee from Dutchess County, $2,500; to C. Rubens, printer, cost of posters, $400; J. C. McCarthy, chairman of the Rhinebeck Town Committee, $500; to telegraph tolls, postage, advertising, printing and sundry contributions, to fire and hose companies and charitable and other local associations in the County of Dutchess, $390. Total $19,790."

Even before inauguration, questions of importance pressed for decision: questions of policy, questions of procedure, questions of patronage, to all of which

Mr. Morton gave the calm, unimpassioned study which had always characterized him, both in business and in public life, thus, at the very threshold of his administration giving notice to Platt that his plans for an absentee governor were scraps of paper.

First, the Board of Canvassers expressed doubts regarding the important question of his term of office. The revised constitution provided for a two years' term, but this constitution was not to become effective until January 1, 1895, the day set for his inauguration. The old constitution, still in force, but not to apply to one hour of his term of office, assigned a three years' period for a Governor's official life. Investigation convinced the Governor-elect that the decision lay with the Board of Canvassers; and in the end, the Board decided, with his consent, that they would simply declare Mr. Morton elected, leaving the question of tenure to be settled later.

His own first great decision, made several weeks before his inauguration, was one which caused disappointment and indignation to half a hundred office-hungry Republican lawyers. It was announced in the following press notice, dated Rhinecliffe-on-Hudson, December 17, 1894: "I have recently given much attention to the question whether the duty will devolve upon me as Governor after January 1st, to appoint the twelve additional Judges of the Supreme Court provided for by the amended Judiciary Article of the Constitution, and with a view to reaching a correct conclusion sought the opinions of jurists and lawyers in various parts of the State. Among the opinions invited were those

of the Honorable Joseph H. Choate, president, and the Honorable Elihu Root, member of the Judiciary Committee of the late Constitutional Convention: Attorney-General Hancock, ex-Judge Noah Davis, the Honorable James C. Carter, ex-Judge Benjamin F. Tracy, Judge Safford E. North, ex-Judge George F. Danforth, ex-Judge Charles Daniels, and Messrs. E. Randolph Robinson, of New York; John G. Milburn, of Buffalo, and James M. Whipplee, of Salamanca. Other opinions which it has been my privilege to consider are those of the Honorable Robert Sewell, County Judge Wilmot Smith, of Suffolk County, E. A. Nash, and the published opinion of ex-Judge A. Bockes. These authorities with but two exceptions, expressed themselves adversely to the theory of my right and authority to make the appointments referred to, and though several of them are not indisposed to concede the power, they all, save the two exceptions noted, question the necessity of action, and express doubts as to whether judicial proceeding and decisions taken before such newly appointed justices would not be in danger of attack on the ground of the unconstitutionality of their appointment.

"With such weight of opinion against the right, wisdom, and necessity of action on my part as Governor, I have determined to make no appointments to these twelve new judicial offices, and to allow them to be filled by the choice of the electors at the next general election, as contemplated and intended by the act of the Constitutional Convention. I have deemed it necessary and proper to make this statement in advance of my accession to office."

This calm, unselfish attitude toward matters touching his future-appointing powers, while it alarmed spoilsmen, greatly delighted the better elements of both parties, giving them grounds for hope that the first administration under the new Constitution would prove worthy of the confidence so generously expressed in his election. The New York *Evening Post* of December 18, 1894, thus interpreted the meaning of his decision, editorially: "Mr. Morton's announcement . . . puts an end to one of the most candid attempts at a job that we can remember in many a day. . . . What is most important and most gratifying in the announcement is the public revelation that we once more have a civilized man in the chief office of the State. . . . When we see Governor Morton calling to his assistance on a question, partly of law and partly of morality, the leading lawyers of the State, and settling it in accordance with their opinion, we get an agreeably increased sense of the value of our late victory."

The better papers throughout the State and the Nation, whether Republican or Democratic, reëchoed this praise: but Platt and his henchmen took comfort from the fact that in any event there would be about 5,000 subordinate places to be filled by appointment soon after inauguration day. Had Platt known the Governor's mind as well as the eminent Counsel, Joseph H. Choate and Elihu Root knew it, however, he would have derived less comfort from the contemplation of the offices so soon to be filled by appointment; for, as Mr. Root recently told the author of this biography, "Governor Morton, fearful that Platt would regard with approval motives which

would not do for him, arranged to have Mr. Choate and me give him advice as questions emerged and politicians threatened. Thus advised, he guarded his independence and made his own decisions."

On January 1, 1895, Mr. Morton was inaugurated, the first Republican Governor of New York since Alonzo B. Cornell, who, on January 1, 1883, had handed over the executive office to Grover Cleveland. The keynote of his two minute address was fit to become a slogan:

"Not for personal or partisan advantage, but for the common good."

His task was in many respects difficult beyond precedent. Thomas C. Platt, heir to the great, silent, invisible domain so long ruled by Roscoe Conkling, was now the political master of New York State, "the Li Hung Chang of the Republican party in New York," as one paper called him. "It was not the Governor; it was not the Legislature," later commented Elihu Root, "it was not any elected officers; it was Mr. Platt; and the capital was not here (in Albany): it was at 49 Broadway, with Mr. Platt and his lieutenants."

This situation was not of Governor Morton's making: but it was a very real, and a very vital part of his problem, entailing acts of diplomacy such as he had never faced, either in Congress, or in Paris, or as Vice President of the United States. Whatever his own desires might be, he was to have Thomas C. Platt, like the poor, always with him, or what might have been worse for the safety of the charge given him by the people, always against him. His greatest problem was to serve the people, despite the tremen-

dous power of the invisible government *with* which, as a Republican, he must work, but *for* which as an honest executive, he must refuse to work.

Platt's frank biographer, Gosnell, presents the situation in the following interesting manner: "It was much harder for Platt to discipline a governor when he became unruly than it was for him to discipline any other State officer. The Governor was a conspicuous figure; he worked in the open, he had important powers, and in case Platt affronted him he could fire back at the organization by skillful use of the patronage, the special message or the veto power. On the other hand, Platt was not without his weapons in dealing with the Governor. Did the Governor want to make a record by the passage of some law 'demanded by the people?' He could see Platt who was, for some purposes, a 'majority of the Legislature.' Did he wish the State Senate to confirm some appointment which would 'raise the tone of the administration?' He could see Platt, who had an iron-clad arrangement with that body. Did he care anything about his political future? Platt was a man to be reckoned with. There is no doubt that Platt played upon the ambitions of every Governor with whom he had relations. Governor Morton had presidential aspirations; Governor Black wanted a renomination; and no one can deny that Governor Roosevelt was ambitious. In the second year of his governorship, Roosevelt was more enthusiastic about party harmony than he was about reform. As long as Platt controlled the primary and election machinery, Roosevelt thought it wise to stand in his good graces."

Governor Morton's difficulties were greatly increased over the normal, by virtue of the fact before referred to, that New York's fourth Constitution went into operation upon the day of his inauguration, involving reorganizations, adjustments, and manifold complications incident to the starting of a new engine. His powers under the new Constitution were still ill-defined; and yet at his elbow, at his front door, in the lobby of his offices swarmed a host of hungry Republicans, so long the outs, now clamoring with blatant insistence for immediate entrance into the State granaries.

On January 2, Governor Morton sent his first annual message to the Legislature. It was a calm analysis of the chief problems confronting the party to which the people of New York had just entrusted complete control of both executive and legislative branches of their Government. In view of the fact that the State had "no . . . indebtedness whatever," scant space was devoted to problems of finance, beyond a plea for "the most rigid economy," and for the greatest possible relief "from direct taxation for State purposes." "The exposures of wholesale corrupt practices and administrative abuses in the municipal departments of the City of New York," soon to be made public in the report of "the special committee of the Senate, known as the Lexow Committee," were cited as offering the dominant Republicans a chance to "be credited with a lofty purpose and not charged with a lust for what are regarded as the 'spoils of victory.'"

He pleaded for effective civil service law enforcement; for more effective election laws; for improving

banking laws by requiring "that the whole capital stock should be actually paid up before the new bank is authorized to commence business," and that bank officers "should not be allowed to loan money to themselves." He warned the Legislature that the insurance business was being conducted under laws which were in need of "considerable amendment and revision," a fact which was sufficiently emphasized ten years later by the Armstrong report which startled the country. He defined his views of executive power in these words: "the Governor should never interfere with the work of the Legislature beyond the precise line which his constitutional duty and obligation warrants. The veto power, as it is commonly called, is one that should be exercised with great care, and only when the interests of the State are in question. The chief Executive should never use it as an instrument to aid in impressing and imposing his will upon the Legislature, nor should it be invoked to serve personal or partisan ends." But by these words he did not mean to deny to the Executive, power to aid the passage of laws which he deemed advisable: and from the first it was his custom to send to the Legislature brief, special messages, urging the passage of such bills when pending, his formula being: "In accordance with the provision of section 15 of article three of the Constitution, and by virtue of the authority conferred upon me, etc."

As Governor, Mr. Morton was a singularly accessible and democratic figure and visitors found little difficulty in passing the barriers which guarded the Governor's office in the Capitol. There behind an

enormous desk the Governor sat, reminding one of Oliver Wendell Holmes' sentence: "like the lion, you could only judge of his age by his size." There were scant symptoms of his seventy years in the straight, well-moulded figure and kindly face.

The Governor's attention was not deflected from his work until the moment of presentation for he had learned the high art of concentration, the mother of success in any walk of life. But when he greeted the visitor, to quote the account written by one of his many callers, it was with "the perfection of courtesy." And that courtesy was not reserved for visitors of distinction or political importance. It was given to all alike. This quality is best illustrated by the following incident told, in another connection, by E. R. Kennedy: "While I was in his office, Senator John Sherman arrived, and shortly afterward the President of one of the largest savings banks of New York City was admitted. A discussion of considerable importance was in progress, which was interrupted by the entrance of a poor little district messenger boy. I observed, with no little surprise, for I was then but little acquainted with Mr. Morton, (but with considerable satisfaction), that he spoke to the boy in exactly the same tone and with precisely the same manner that he employed in addressing the gentlemen I have mentioned. Then, turning to me Mr. Morton asked me if I would excuse him for waiting upon the boy immediately, 'for,' he said, 'if the little fellow is detained his employer will not know the reason and will blame him.' Then, having prepared his reply, he handed it to the boy with a pleasant word and a smile of dismissal, and returned to the discussion."

His method of work was the very essence of method. He arrived at his office at nine A.M., studied and disposed of official correspondence until ten, had a brief conference with his private secretary, Colonel Ashley W. Cole, an experienced metropolitan newspaper man, and then passed into the Executive Chamber where he spent two or three hours examining official documents, signing or vetoing bills, receiving visitors, and doing the thousand and one things which fall to the daily lot of Governors. He took his luncheon, habitually, at the Executive Mansion, and often returned to his office in the afternoon.

Even before the oath of office was administered, patronage, that ghoul of governors and presidents, approached him with hands outstretched; and the old, old conflict for place and placing began. The Civil Service clamored for complete control; while the voice of the professional spoilsman answered the cry with the demand for his share, meaning whatever could be taken from the people's treasury without too much danger of the stripes without the stars.

From the beginning of his administration Governor Morton had been accepted by the best element of the State as in sympathy with reform. On January 5, 1895, the famous editor, E. L. Godkin, wrote: "You have begun splendidly. Your message was excellent and I am quite sure if you stand by the reform element firmly you will go out of office covered with glory." And there is no possible doubt in view of his general record as Governor, that he did "stand by the reform element," but he refused to be dominated by it. He made his decisions, with the help of his able advisers, Root and Choate, not as a reformer

but as a practical executive, chosen not to lead a crusade, but to administer a public trust. He accepted the political world as he found it, and sought to work in the atmosphere which existed. Honest himself, he expected honesty of others, but he was not, reformer-like, certain that honesty can be created by the machinery of law; nor was he certain that the best advice must of necessity come from those who do not wish public office. But he was, uncompromisingly, a friend of efficient and patriotic public service, thinking less of the idealism of his convictions than of their practicability in view of very practical problems.

The application of the merit system to New York's Civil Service had fallen so completely into disuse that, out of 3,453 salaried posts to be awarded, only 429 were left in the competitive list. With the purpose of restoring the merit system, the constitutional convention had put into the new Constitution a clause making competitive requirement binding alike upon the Legislature and the Governor. The filling of the three commissionerships was of course the crux of the situation. With three sincere and able reformers in charge, the merit system would have a chance, even against so powerful a machine as that which Platt operated. But with machine men as Commissioners, reform would be hopeless. In facing the same problem, Governor Cleveland had appointed as Commissioners, Andrew D. White, Augustus Schoonmaker, and Henry A. Richmond, men admirably equipped to fight for reform; and when Mr. White resigned, John Jay had been given his place. This had been the beginning of the

conflict which had made of Grover Cleveland the candidate of the reformers in the presidential race of 1884. What the public was waiting to know was whether Governor Morton, strengthened by recent constitutional changes, would imitate Grover Cleveland, or follow the examples later set by Hill and Flower who had wrecked the merit system. What Platt and the Faithful were waiting to know was the same, and there were very practical reasons for their special interest in the answer. Besides the Civil Service Commissioners, each to draw a salary of $2,000, the Governor had at his immediate disposal three State assessorships, salary $3,000; one lunacy commissioner, salary $5,000; one commissioner of the new capital, salary $7,000; one superintendent of public buildings, salary $3,500; and two commissioners of statutory revision, salary $3,000. These larger spoils of victory were supplemented by thousands of lesser posts, each capable of making power for the machine, if left to the machine which claimed to be the author of Governor Morton's victory.

The first apparent trial of strength between the Governor and Platt intimated executive independence. Hamilton Fish, detested by Platt, desired the speakership, and his ambition was supported by Mr. Morton. Platt made no open resistance, but Fish's success was hailed as a Platt defeat. "It is well known," said the Rochester *Union Advertiser* of January 7, "that Governor Morton favored Mr. Fish and presumably told Mr. Platt so, and that Platt acquiesced in the scheme to elect Fish speaker, and secretly gave the necessary orders, not because

he wanted Fish, but because he feared the nice, old gentleman from Ellerslie might prove refractory after he had donned the gubernatorial harness, if his request was not complied with. . . . Before the affrighted eyes of the Plattites there looms up the possibility of a reorganization of the political machinery of the G. O. P. in the State, under the social and financial auspices of Messrs. Levi P. Morton and Hamilton Fish, with the Platt ring of political tricksters left out."

But Speaker Fish's next act relieved the public of any idea that Platt was to be disregarded by the new Speaker: for the day after the above surmise was published, Fish called on Platt, and was instantly denounced by the anti-Platt journals throughout the State, and beyond. In answer, he courageously announced his views as follows: "I am neither surprised nor disturbed over the criticisms that have been made over my visit to Mr. Platt. If anyone can point out a good reason why I should not have paid my respects to the acknowledged leader of my party in this State, I will concede that I made a mistake. Mr. Platt took no part or parcel in the speakership contest. He asked no one to vote for me or against me. . . . Assume that I did not call upon the party leader, that I retired to my shell. . . . I would have been criticised just as severely by men in my own party." And on the same day, Governor Morton let it be known through the press that upon Platt's pending visit to Albany, he would dine at the Executive Mansion. Evidently there was to be no "machine busting" during that administration unless new provocations should arise.

The cause at once assigned to this announcement by the Governor's opponents, was a thirst for the presidential nomination of 1896; but to his close allies it was his belief in party government, and his conviction that the "Easy Boss" was much less horrific an enemy of society than slander had depicted him. The Governor apparently did not study his own motives very critically, having learned to trust them without morbid introspection. Platt was the openly acknowledged head of the Republican party within the State. He himself had been elected to work with that party, in so far as conscience would allow; and this he proposed to do, despite the clamor of those who seemed to believe that the end and aim of government is Civil Service reform. Meanwhile, on January 2, 1895, Governor Morton appointed George W. Aldridge, of Rochester, as superintendent of Public Works, a nomination highly pleasing to Platt, but abhorred by the anti-Platters, who claimed to see in the selection a willingness to place in Platt's hands the distribution of the political patronage of the State. "The voice is the voice of Levi," commented David B. Hill, "but the hand is the hand of Thomas."

On January 8, the Buffalo *Times*, mindful of the importance of the pending appointment of the Civil Service Commission, warned the public that "to intrust its execution to a boss . . . or to agents or beneficiaries of a boss, would be like intrusting the nursing of infants to officers appointed by Herod," adding: "We are prompted to make these remarks by seeing reports in the Albany *News* that, among the prominent candidates for commissioner-

ships are two Platt editors." And the New York *Times*, the same day, said, "the strongest kind of an effort is being made to persuade Governor Morton to send to the Senate tomorrow night the names of the new Civil Service Commissioners . . . who hold office at the pleasure of the Governor. The present commission consists of Editor (E. Prentiss) Bailey, of the Utica Observer, Editor (Willard D.) McKinstry, of Watertown, and DeForest Van Vliet, of Ithaca. It is understood that Governor Morton is to retain Mr. McKinstry, as a personal compliment to ex-Governor Flower. . . . For the other two vacancies a swarm of Republican editors is besieging Albany, in comparison with which the toads of Egypt were a blessing."

Had the writers of these warnings looked into Governor Morton's letter book of the next few days, their alarm would doubtless have doubled. On January 12, 1895, Platt wrote to the Governor:

"I have been disturbed and worried by the impression that seems to have been made upon your mind by Mr. Depew's letter in favor of (John A.) Sleicher, (of Albany), and I want to say two or three words, for fear that you do not quite comprehend the situation. There is no reason in the world, political or otherwise, why Sleicher should be restored. If the object to be attained is to secure favor with the *Mail and Express*, I want to say to you that Sleicher is not in any respect the Editor-in-Chief of that paper; in fact, with the controlling spirits of that paper he is *persona non grata*. As I have intimated to you before, Foster Coates of the *Commercial*

Advertiser, is also an anxious aspirant, and there would be much more politics in conciliating that paper than the *Mail and Express*."

Three days later, the Governor returned from a trip to New York City, accompanied by Platt: and explained to eager reporters: "I have invited Mr. Platt to visit me just as I have asked Mayor Strong and others: I am glad at all times to see my friends in Albany." But, on the score of business, the Boss declined either to visit or dine with the Governor. Instead, he granted an audience to the State Legislature, inspected the State offices, held a conference with the Lexow Committee, and then departed as ostentatiously as he had arrived. There was no mistaking the meaning of his visit. He meant to continue boss of the works.

The same day the appointment of Willard A. Cobb, a Platt editor of the Lockport *Journal*, as Civil Service Commissioner, to succeed E. Prentiss Bailey, was announced: and the next day the New York *Post*, in an 'I told you so' editorial, urged the Civil Service Reform Association to oppose confirmation, denouncing the appointment as an attempt "to prostitute the civil service machinery of the State to almost the lowest possible level by appointing the blatant editor of a Platt country organ to one of the Commissionerships." The New York *Times*, more charitable in its interpretation, remarked: "Apparently Governor Morton has not yet realized how important the Commission is to be, judging from the nomination now hanging fire in the Senate."

On January 17, a distinguished company of Civil

Service Reformers headed by Everett P. Wheeler, called on the Governor, to impress upon him the importance of the opportunity given by the new Constitution to reform the service, and four days later Platt wrote to Ashley W. Cole: "I do not know of anyone inside the organization or outside of it who has any purpose in trying to prevent the Governor from giving a faithful observance to the civil service laws. But I know of no reason why these ultra advocates of civil service, such as the committee who called upon the Governor are, should be permitted to utterly demoralize and destroy the elements of strength of the organization of the great Republican party in the State. . . . Every man in official position is always pestered by these same people; and, let him do his best, he never can satisfy them, except he adopts their ultra views and acts accordingly."

In extenuation of certain bad appointments of these early weeks, the Governor's friends urged that his absence from the State for four years had left him where he had been forced to depend upon the judgment of friends: but on January 24, he made to one of these friends this declaration of independence: "I propose to be Governor of the State of New York, not the Governor of a party, of a faction of a party, and certainly not of an individual leader of a party." A few days later he announced the selection of Silas Burt, a Democrat and a well-known leader of the Civil Service Reform movement as a member of the Commission, and Theodore Roosevelt, then a United States Civil Service Commissioner, thus voiced the joy of his fellow-reformers:

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
February 7, 1895.

HON. LEVI P. MORTON,
GOVERNOR'S MANSION,
ALBANY, N. Y.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR MORTON:

You must pardon my writing you a line just to say how delighted I am with the action you have recently taken in reference to civil service matters. As I understand it you have definitely appointed Silas Burt, Commissioner. Silas Burt is a Democrat, whatever the New York *Sun* may say about him, and his appointment was just the one to make in view of the Civil Service Reform Association's feeling in the matter. I am very much pleased at your decision that the people now under the law shall be kept under the law. It is the only right thing to do. By your action you have not only strengthened the case of decent government and of civil service reform, but you have greatly strengthened our party, and I thank you for it, not only as a New Yorker, but as a Republican. Don't bother to answer this, but get your secretary to drop me a line about Burt. Do you think McKinstry a good man?

With great regard,

Very faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Despite his sympathy with the civil service reform movement, however, he was never the vassal of a system; and when circumstances seemed to demand variations, he was ready to act and to take the full burden of responsibility for the results. On May 2,

1895, for example, he wrote to Mayor Strong, of New York:

"The bi-partisan police bill is before you for consideration, and I am informed that you entertain some doubt as to the advisability of sanctioning the provision for civil service examinations within the department by its own board of civil service Commissioners. I take it for granted that with the admirable names which you informed me you had selected for appointment as the new police commissioners, the whole public will be fully satisfied. Mr. Roosevelt is an undoubted and expert civil service man; Colonel Grant is a West Point officer with actual army experience and Commissioner Andrews is likewise a West Pointer. The police force of New York is a large semi-military organization, and it appears to me that an exception may be fairly made in that department, in relation to the civil service feature of its organization. I assume, also, that the municipal civil service board will not find much idle time on its hands in administering the extensive duties already imposed upon it.

"For these reasons alone I am favorably inclined toward the bill as it is today, but I venture to speak all the more earnestly for another reason. I can very well see that in the rather uncertain temper and attitude of some members of the Legislature, and especially at this late period in the session, how misfortune may follow any attempt to secure even a trifling amendment to a bill. To bring this measure which has already cost so much effort back for amendment might give opportunity to some malcontents to

delay, or perhaps defeat it altogether. . . . I trust that you may be able to view this subject as we do and not permit a minor question to imperil so much that is desirable."

At the very moment of giving this advice to Mayor Strong, itself not calculated to conciliate Platt, he felt called upon to veto a measure especially dear to the latter's heart: and to Platt's indignant protest, he returned the following "soft answer [which] turneth away wrath":

May 3rd, 1895.

HON. T. C. PLATT,
49 Broadway,
New York City.

MY DEAR SENATOR:

Your private note of yesterday causes me more pain than I can find words to express.

If my action as Governor of this State in disapproving a bill, after weeks of serious and careful consideration of all statements and arguments bearing upon it, is to be viewed as "desertion by friends in the time of trial," I must bear the charge, grievous and unjust though it be.

I am entirely warranted in saying that no one but myself ever can realize the tremendous strain that I have been subjected to in relation to that bill, and I gave to it most patient and sincere consideration, with a view to reaching a just conclusion. And I cannot refrain from saying here that nothing could, in my judgment, be more impolitic from the standpoint of party considerations—as well as unfair to me—than to let such bitter conflicts within the party

ranks come to the Executive Chamber for ultimate determination. As a last resort, such a measure should be withdrawn as a matter of diplomacy.

I sincerely hope that a few hours at most, will tend to mitigate very largely, if not wholly, the distress which you now feel as a result of my action—and temper the severity of your judgment as to myself.

Very sincerely yours,

LEVI P. MORTON.

A few days before the State elections of 1895, the Republican State Committee asked the people to indorse the "intelligent, moderate, sensible policies" of Governor Morton by re-electing such of the candidates as had been his associates. The result was 93,000 majority for them, which a contemporary newspaper pronounced "the greatest endorsement ever given any Governor in any State in the Union at any period in the Union's history."

Such a vote of confidence was of a character to induce a haughty sense of self-sufficiency and in the case of a man of small calibre would certainly have had that effect. On December 12, 1895, Platt sent a letter calculated, though evidently not designed, to test whether it had so affected the Governor. "A letter which reached me this afternoon from Colonel Cole," he wrote, "surprises me: and a subsequent visit received from Mr. James Stewart, giving the details of his interview with you yesterday, surprises me more. It is true that the man whom Mr. Lauterbach and I recommended to you is one of *our* friends, and known as such of all men—There seemed to be a peculiar irony in your making a condi-

tion to Mr. Stewart that he must procure the endorsement of some leading man opposed to the majority of the organization in this City; . . . you must have known, just as well as I do now, that that was an absurd request."

The Governor's answer was conciliatory; but the facts remained as they had been; and a few days later he offended again, this time in the important matter of the Gas Inspectorship: and Platt wrote: "I am not in a frame of mind to express my opinion upon the position you take in the Gas Inspectorship matter, only that I desire to say that you are making a mistake in yielding to the gentlemen who are neither your friends nor mine and whose demands are utterly unreasonable—They have all the patronage of this municipal administration. We get nothing except what you are disposed to give us. And then I note, when it comes to be a question between ourselves and the Union League Club, you 'take to the woods.' You will find, when it comes to be a question as between you and McKinley or Reed, I will know exactly where to be found."

In view of the fact that a presidential year was almost dawning, this was indeed a menacing letter, when written by the State Republican master to a presidential aspirant: but it failed to bring the Governor to heel as Platt intended. It also failed to cause him to rush into the arms of the Civil Service Reformers and allow them to dictate his appointments: and when Civil Service Commissioner McKinstry retired, the announcement of George P. Lord as his successor aroused the fiercest protest. On January 14, 1896, Civil Service Commissioner

Silas W. Burt wrote: "Many of our Civil Service friends are disturbed about the nomination of Mr. Lord. I had anticipated this and tried in some measure to prepare you for it. Under Governors Hill and Flower these same men saw a succession of appointments to that Commission that were absurd and disappointing. Governor Cleveland had selected a commission of well-known advocates of the reform, but his two Democratic successors, hostile or indifferent to the reform and considering all their appointments as spoils, filled the commission with appointees who had no interest in the successful execution of the law. . . . The embodiment of the merit principle in the Constitution and your election as Governor were rightly considered as presages of better things, and I know the reform bodies have appreciated what you have done to make the constitutional provision operative, and have publicly expressed that appreciation." With reference to the best course to pursue, he added: "I think the friends of Mr. Lord . . . should make it easy for you to withdraw his name, for I am convinced that his confirmation would be injurious."

This was, however, by no means the universal opinion, even among friends of civil service reform. Senator Raines let it be known that he had suggested Lord's name as he desired a Commissioner "who would not be under the influence of Colonel Burt." The Watertown *Times* declared: "Whether Mr. Lord is a friend of civil service reform or not, it is safe to say he will be in a short time . . . Governor Morton is in favor of a strict enforcement of the spirit as well as the letter of the law, and nothing can

be done without his consent. There is thus no danger of any backward step during his administration. . . . So much has been accomplished that it cannot be overthrown especially with the strong determination of the Governor that it shall not be." George McAneny, Secretary of the Civil Service Reform Association, while frankly desirous of defeating Lord for the post made vacant by the involuntary retirement of McKinstry, unhesitatingly declared that the Governor had shown himself a sincere friend of Civil Service Reform, and had done much to advance the cause.

But neither abuse from friends, nor abuse from foes had power to ruffle the Governor's serenity or to alter his opinion of Lord; and his reply to Burt showed no sign of weakening:

January 20th, 1896.

Colonel Silas W. Burt,
Mills Building, Broad St.,
New York City.

My Dear Colonel Burt:

I am in receipt of your letter of January 14th, and have read its contents with great interest.

I am not disposed to take issue with you upon any points suggested in your letter beyond saying that I do not think there is any sufficient ground in the nomination of Mr. Lord for the fierce attacks that are made upon him by the friends of Civil Service. My position in relation to both the law and the principles of the civil service system is, I think, well understood. I have given them hearty and sincere support and throughout the remainder of my public life I shall not

be found to falter at any point in that regard. I think the opposition to Mr. Lord was *started* through a misapprehension and the assumption that he was in the Senate during the Tweed régime. Having begun the crusade its instigators chose to continue it, even after they found that they had unfairly accused one man of the faults and errors of another. Mr. Lord has been strongly endorsed by Comptroller Roberts, Congressman Sereno E. Payne, Lieutenant-Governor Saxton and others, and I have no doubt that upon his accession to your Board you will find him coöperating with you in the administration of the laws and living fully up to the requirements of the position.

You will see from the correspondence that has passed between us that I have taken every precaution to guard the interests of Civil Service Reform. The nomination of a Civil Service Commission appears to me to be an act that is bound to bring forth a volley of protests from one side or the other. Even in your case I was hotly assailed for nominating you by what may be called the "political or machine element"; but their protests were of no avail. In like manner the appointment of Mr. Cobb was denounced by the Civil Service people, but unless I am misinformed you have both found it quite possible to work in harmony and for the best interests of the public in conformity with the law.

I believe and sincerely hope that in Mr. Lord the members of the Board will find an equally good coadjutor and colleague.

Very truly yours,

LEVI P. MORTON.

I shall be pleased if you will show this letter to Mr. Godkin. L. P. M.

Meanwhile, on January 16, the Senate Committee on Finance had unanimously agreed to recommend Lord's confirmation; and its advice was soon followed by the Senate, thus making the Commission, William A. Cobb, Silas W. Burt and George P. Lord. And on January 25, Burt again wrote to the Governor: "Mr. Lord has been confirmed and the Commission is complete. . . . You are probably correct in your prevision that the Commission will be united."

One month later, an Albany dispatch gave reason to believe that this *union* extended also to the Governor. "Governor Morton," it said, "is of the opinion that the employees of the executive department should be classified, just as employees of other departments, under the civil service. He recently requested the Civil Service Commissioners to classify them, which they have done, and Governor Morton has approved the classification. The classification provides that the positions of private secretary, military secretary, appointment clerk, pardon clerk and executive stenographer shall be in Schedule A—exempt from examinations—and the other clerks in schedule B—open to competition. . . . This does not affect those holding positions at present."

In the face of friend, in the face of foe, despite praise, despite blame, he had taken his own course with reference to the merit system, guided by a sense of fitness, and the binding provisions of the new Constitution. But no one longer had just cause

to doubt that he was a friend of Civil Service Reform. Insisting upon continued friendship with the extremes of both sides, and maintaining it, he had kept to the middle of the road, and in the end came surprisingly near satisfying all factions. There was ever in him, despite the unfair criticism which is the lot of every honest public official, a genial charity even for his traducers. On March 21, 1896, in acknowledging timely letters of defense which had appeared in the New York *Times* and *Evening Post*, he wrote to Mr. Stuyvesant Fish: "In my present position I have every reason to understand the extent to which misquotation and misrepresentation extend, though I will say that I do not always credit them to evil intent, but more generally to the misrepresentation on the part of persons to whom the communications are made and by whom they are so often repeated or written to others."

How little justification there was for the innuendo that Platt was running the Morton administration was again made clear by the Governor's action in issuing a special message urging the passage of the Pavey-Page Compromise school bill for New York City. The *Herald*, on March 21, 1896, declared: "Those well meaning people who have assumed that Governor Morton was permitting Mr. Platt to hold the State Convention over his head as a club to force him to sign the Raines bill were rudely shocked today when the Governor sent this special message. . . . This was the Governor's way of saying to Mr. Platt: 'If clubs are trumps, I think I will lead.'" Eleven days later, the Compromise school bill passed, in the face of the opposition of Platt, and his henchmen.

The heavy Republican vote for the measure was due largely to the message of Governor Morton urging its passage.

At about the same time, Platt again wrote to the Governor, complaining that his nominations were not being accepted, adding, with reference to George W. Dunn: "That such a man, at such a time and on such a measure, should be turned down by reason of his close personal relations to me, passes my comprehension." Two days later, the Governor still further defied Platt by nominating Colonel Henry H. Lyman, of Oswego, as State Commissioner of Excise, although Platt ardently desired the selection of Commodore Perry Vedder.

Thus it is evident that the Brooklyn *Eagle*, a not too friendly critic, spoke the truth when it assured its readers that "Mr. Platt yields to Mr. Morton oftener than Mr. Morton yields to Mr. Platt." And the facts make it clear that, under Governor Morton, the constitutional requirement regarding the regulation of the Civil Services was put into operation; a thorough revision of the Civil Service rules was effected, and a reclassification of the offices promulgated, although there was no revision of the civil service law itself; and no legislative action upon the subject.

On August 4, 1896, he addressed to the Civil Service Commission of the State a long letter directing them "to prepare and submit . . . for executive consideration such a revision of the rules and regulations concerning the administration of the Civil Service as you may deem proper, together with a new classification of such officers of the State, and of the

civil divisions thereof, as may be within the present jurisdiction of the Commission." Before their work was completed, Platt learned of its general character and hastened to do what he could to block the projected reform. He also addressed to Governor Morton the following letter:

NEW YORK,
Nov. 29, 1896.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR,

I learn that you have called a Meeting of the Civil Service Commission for next Tuesday for the purpose of forcing through Mr. Burt's pet scheme of reclassification. I have been given the opportunity of hastily perusing these proposed new rules and I cannot but conclude that you have not thoroughly investigated the subject and do not fully understand what is contemplated. It does not seem possible that you would favor any plan so radical and revolutionary, unless you have made up your mind to absolutely surrender to the Mugwumps and deal the Republican Party and its organization a fatal blow. One thing is certain, that if this scheme is carried out, while it may earn you the plaudits of these fanatical "reformers" of the *Evening Post* school, who have always been your political enemies, it will insure you the lasting displeasure of all those practical and loyal Republicans who have been for a quarter of a century your devoted admirers and active supporters and who are ever alert for the welfare and success of the Grand Old Party. You cannot, by such a policy, magnify yourself, except at the expense of the Party and your old friends.

General Tracy tried this same Mugwump policy when he was Secretary of the Navy, and he will never in his life be able to divest himself of the odium which followed. It was considered a base betrayal of the party organization. He did just what you are attempting to do, force a scheme, without one word of consultation with the party leaders. This man Burt is, and always has been, a marplot and assistant-democrat in disguise, and considering how fully you must understand his early career, I am at a loss to understand why you should blindly follow his advice and suggestions.

I called together a dozen or more of the faithful leaders of the Party on Friday evening last to consider this important question and there was but one feeling expressed and that of indignation over the situation and a charitable doubt that it was not possible you really understood the full scope and bearing of these new rules, that you must be deceived by Comr. Burt, or as some expressed it "hypnotised" by him. You have so little to do with the details of the party machinery and the embarrassments of those who are responsible for party management, that you evidently do not appreciate what this all means.

These proposed new rules are so sweeping in their character that they will bring within the scope of the Civil Service Law, nearly everything in the way of political patronage, including the employees of the Legislature, even down to the page-boys. Mr. Burt may tell you that the latter is not intended but he *knows better*, and he knows that the Courts could not help but so construe it. It takes in Capitol Em-

ployees, deputy County Treasurers and whole lists of men in the rural districts now exempt. This will cause a howl of indignation to go up from one end of the State to the other from our Party friends.

Now what I ask at present is that you will not aid Burt in pushing through his scheme on Tuesday. (He cannot do it without you.) At any rate let the time be extended for ten days or two weeks in order that we may have a chance to go over it *thoroughly* and suggest such amendments, as the party interests demand, and are fair and reasonable.

Sincerely yours,

T. C. PLATT.

Honorable
LEVI P. MORTON.

P.S. Pardon the haste of this letter.

Platt's impassioned plea was however wasted: for the Governor saw in the new Civil Service Rules which Commissioner Burt presented to him on November 30, 1896, a reform long needed. On December 9, he approved the Rules and Commissioner Burt thus acknowledged Mr. Morton's prompt and courageous action:

STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF
NEW YORK CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION,
NEW YORK CITY, Decr. 9th, 1896.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

I was much relieved on the receipt of your telegram announcing the promulgation of the rules today. It was evident to me that there was a purpose to gain

delay and, if possible, to prevent action. While I knew that this ultimate end could not be accomplished by such manœuvres, I saw your complications that could only be avoided by such prompt action as you have taken.

It has been impracticable to discuss the new rules publicly, for obvious reasons, but when they are made public tomorrow those who have opposed their formulation will have to confess that no more has been done than the Constitution demands. The newspapers that have been obstreperous will find that the many absurd comments they have made are not sustained by the facts.

I am confident that you will have no cause to regret your official action in this matter and I believe you will supplement it by a selection for the vacancy in the office of District Attorney here that will equally please your real friends. . . .

Thanking you for your kind consideration and patience with me at all times, I am as ever,

Yours sincerely,

SILAS W. BURT.

HON. LEVI P. MORTON,
Albany, N. Y.

Thus did Governor Morton initiate and carry into operation what Carl Schurz later characterized as "the completest embodiment of the Civil Service Reform idea so far attempted in any State." The New York *Evening Post* declared: "Governor Morton deserves the thanks of all friends of good government for his public-spirited action in approving the extension of the Civil Service regulations. It is no

secret that in doing this he has disregarded the appeals of the Platt machine."

On December 17, Commissioner Burt sent Governor Morton a copy of a set of resolutions passed by the Civil Service Reform League, acknowledging the Governor's services to the cause. They were inclosed in the following letter, itself a tribute:

STATE OF NEW YORK
NEW YORK CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION,
NEW YORK CITY
Decr. 17th, 1896.

HON. LEVI P. MORTON,
870 5th Avenue,
City.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have only now been able to procure a complete copy of the resolutions adopted by the National Civil Service Reform League at its recent annual meeting in Philadelphia and have marked on it the one relating to your recent promulgation of the revised rules.

Other marked tributes were paid to you in the speeches; that by Mr. Doman B. Eaton being notable because of its fervor and the high standard by which that gentleman measures all officials in this regard.

Your memorandum accompanying the publication of the rules was an admirable exposition of the urgent reasons for your action and of the moderate tenor of the rules themselves. I think they are satisfactory in all respects but one and that is in the addition, at the last moment and against my protest, of many exempt places, but it was so late that rather than risk

further delay I decided to make no appeal to you. In a speech at Philadelphia, Secretary Morton said that in the 2200 places in the Agricultural Department there was only one exempt from competitive examination—this only by way of illustration.

Thanking you heartily for your kind consideration, confidence, and I may say your patience with me despite many misrepresentations, I shall always be proud of my official relations with you, and remain

Yours faithfully,

SILAS W. BURT.

The Resolutions congratulated New York and the nation upon the "truly remarkable progress of the reform under the second administration of President Cleveland," and added: "The League congratulates the State of New York upon the recent classification of its state and departmental service. This important administrative act attests in the clearest and strongest manner the loyalty of Governor Morton to the obligations of the Constitution, and has been hailed with satisfaction by the friends of Civil Service Reform throughout the Union." It is a significant fact that Governor Morton was the only Governor thus singled out for praise for signal service done, during his administration, to the cause of Civil Service Reform.

CHAPTER IX

GOVERNOR MORTON AND THE GREATER NEW YORK BILL

JUST as the crux of Governor Morton's political position was Platt, and the necessity of working with the Platt machine, so the crux of his problems was the scheme for the formation of Greater New York, a scheme already well advanced before he assumed office at Albany. Indeed, the movement was officially five years old, a Commission, appointed in 1890,[1] having been engaged, during the intervening years, in studying the problem and preparing a report. That report had been sent to the Legislature the day before Governor Morton's inauguration, and he had of course seen an advance copy. It declared that, in 1894, the question had been submitted to the people of the cities involved, and a verdict given by them in favor of consolidation, "every municipality proposed by the Commissioners for union," with the exception of Flushing and Westchester, having "declared in its favor."

[1] Unofficially it was much older, Andrew Haswell Green, of New York City, having suggested, in 1868, the consolidation of the municipalities of New York State clustered about New York bay, and along the North and East rivers. *Official New York from Cleveland to Hughes.* By Charles Elliott Fitch, Hurd Publishing Co., New York and Buffalo, 1911, vol. iv, p. 13.

The Commission recommended "the enactment of a simple declaration by the law-making authority, that the territory concerned, its people and its property, shall thereafter be one city (to be known as 'The Mayor, Aldermen and Commonality of the City of New York), under one government, with one destiny"; and it submitted a bill framed in consonance with these views.

In his first annual message, sent to the Legislature on January 2, 1895, Governor Morton gave to the suggestions of this report such assent as can be given by a conscientious official, upon whose shoulders the burden of personal responsibility has just fallen. His approval was in these words:

"Last year the Legislature enacted a law submitting to the voters of New York, Brooklyn and adjacent cities the question of bringing all their population into one great municipality. The people of the cities involved in the proposition have declared by popular vote in favor of this consolidation, and it now becomes the duty of the Legislature to take such further steps as are necessary to carry their wishes into effect. The framing of a charter for a city of more than three millions of people is a comprehensive, delicate and important task; one that should not be entered upon without careful and serious preparation. It is doubtful whether the Legislature, in view of the many duties that will press upon it during the coming season, will be able to fully perform this labor. I suggest, therefore, *that a commission* be at once created, to be composed of the most capable citizens of the various localities interested, and to be charged with the power and the duty

of framing a charter and reporting the same to the present Legislature, if such a plan can be drafted and submitted before the session closes."

In view of so guarded a statement, it is manifestly unfair to contend that such assent bound the Governor, permanently, to a rigid and unchangeable program regarding so vast a problem. Assuming the facts, as stated in the report, and he was as yet in no position to question them, he proposed prompt action upon manifest popular desire, and suggested a new Commission to execute that desire. To question the existence of such a popular desire at such a time, in the face of the Commission's unqualified assertion, would of course have been utter folly, even had the question entered his mind; and there appears no reason to think that it had entered.

The idea of a new Commission, however, failed to commend itself to Platt whose party program contemplated the continuance of the old Commission, of which Andrew H. Green was President and I. S. T. Stranahan, Vice President, and whose report had disposed of the troublesome question of public opinion with the words: "The popular will having been thus expressed, it remains for the Legislature to determine the terms and conditions upon which effect shall be given to it."

Whether ignorantly or by intention, the Old Commission's report had failed to record the fact that a considerable percentage of the people of Brooklyn refused to accept the so-called "plebiscite of 1894" as a fair index of public opinion. But the opposition was not reluctant to let the new Governor know of its dissent: and, therefore, a single day in office

sufficed to raise in Governor Morton's mind a question regarding the Commission's confident assertion that the electors of the cities concerned had "given their verdict in favor of union." Accordingly, without waiting for further developments, he set himself to the task of discovering the actual state of public opinion in these cities, and on January 3, inquired of the Mayors of New York and of Brooklyn whether their constituents really desired the union, his inquiries being in the following form:

[January 3rd, 1895.]

MY DEAR MR. MAYOR:

The question of the Greater New York will be introduced in the Legislature at an early date, and I desire to be informed of the public sentiment in Brooklyn on this question. For that I must rely largely, if not entirely, upon you, and shall highly appreciate the frank and full statement of your views on the subject, not for publication but for my own guidance.

Thanking you in advance, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

LEVI P. MORTON.

In this effort to make certain of the facts, Boss Platt scented hesitation, and decided to check it by dangling the Presidency before the Governor's eyes. Therefore, the very day of Mr. Morton's letter to the Mayors, Platt sent him the following almost unbelievably insolent communication:

"I say to you that this whole [Greater New York] business utterly discourages and demoralizes me; and

it makes me wonder what would be the result if you succeeded in becoming President of the United States, and had to meet such issues as are involved in the questions of the present hour, for instance the Venezuelan question and the Bond question. . . . And if you are to persist in the policy which you have outlined in your letter, we might as well quit right where we are and not introduce any resolution or bill for Greater New York; but I assure you that you will be the greater sufferer from such a cowardly policy. In such case I will not feel like taking off my coat and doing the work I contemplated in the presidential matter. I might as well be frank with you now. If matters of legislation are to be run on the issue of the presidential candidacy, it will be impossible for us to accomplish anything upon any question which involves sharp differences of opinion, however strongly the balance may be in favor of the course which the organization is recommending."

The Governor, being preëminently a man of good will, had the useful faculty of blandly ignoring personalities, generously conceding what he could concede without violence to his Puritan conscience, but also pressing to his goal regardless of opposition of friend or foe. We have no copy of his reply to Platt's letter, but the records show that he went on his way with reference to the Greater New York project, forming his own opinions, slowly, cautiously and with characteristic consideration for the views of those whose own cities would be affected by the change. The more he investigated, the clearer became his conviction that public opinion demanded the creation of a new Commission: and he accord-

ingly persisted in urging the change: but with the calm assumption that this course would not interfere with his friendly relations with Platt, head of New York Republicanism. It was no part of his plan to quarrel with the organization whose support was essential to the success of his administration; but he had no intention of fulfilling the destiny which Platt had so alluringly sketched for him in July, 1894, and allowing the Republican machine to run the government which he himself was sworn to administer faithfully. Platt's petulance he could endure: Platt's insolent assumption that he was using the Governorship as a mere stepping-stone to the Presidency he could properly disregard, if only he could succeed in fulfilling the great trust which the people of New York had confided to him.

Therefore, he continued his correspondence with the Boss precisely as though nothing had happened; but he continued also to test the sentiment of the people concerning the validity of the referendum of 1894 which Platt and the Old Commission had pronounced conclusive. On January 13, he wrote to Platt:

Confidential.

DEAR SENATOR:

I inclose herewith a confidential letter from Mayor Wurster, of Brooklyn, together with two inclosures on the subject of consolidation. This letter came to me this morning by the hand of one of the assistants to the Corporation Counsel, acting as the Mayor's messenger, and was written in reply to a note which I addressed to the Mayor on January 3rd. . . .

I had been inclined to the belief from conversations which I had with yourself and others on the subject that Mayor Wurster was on the whole favorably disposed to the consolidation idea, and I am somewhat taken aback this morning by the strong expression of his views adversely to consolidation; he goes into the question very thoroughly and I can only ask that you read it through . . . and then give me your opinion regarding it. . . .

Very sincerely yours,

LEVI P. MORTON.

It was certainly no surprise to Platt to read in the inclosed letter of Mayor Wurster an indignant denunciation of the idea that Brooklyn had expressed a desire to become a suburb of New York. "The vision of a Tammany Mayor governing Brooklyn by deputy Tammany Sachems," he said, "is horrible enough to shock even the most ardent annexationist."

Meanwhile William S. Strong, Mayor of New York, had also registered his protest, making it quite clear that the vision had no charm for him: and these opinions, combined with many others, less authoritative, led Governor Morton to conclude that consolidation as planned before his election faced obstacles serious if not insuperable.

The new State Constitution provided that all acts of the Legislature and the Governor affecting cities should be submitted to the Mayors or Common Councils of the cities so affected, and, if disapproved by them, should become laws only after being passed a second time, and a second time approved by the Governor. According to Platt's machine-made code

of political ethics, the Governor's duty was simply to override the Mayors, and let the noble work of consolidation proceed, regardless of the protests of the consolidated: but the Governor's set purpose was different. In his inaugural address he had solemnly pledged himself to use his powers "not for personal nor partisan advantages" but to be in all good faith "the servant of the people." He was quite conscious of the fact, later so rudely cast in his teeth by the indignant Boss, that "before anything was done with reference to the action of the Legislature, a conference was called . . . at General Tracy's house, at which there were present yourself, Mr. Lauterbach, General Tracy, Senator Hiscock, Mr. Roberts and myself. This conference was arranged for no other purpose than to exchange views with you as to legislative action on this question and the Raines Bill, and to govern ourselves accordingly. If you will remember, both of the proposed measures were gone over in general and in detail, and you must have fully understood what the plan was, and what the purpose was of getting together."

But new facts had since emerged, and the Governor now knew what he had not then suspected, that there was, in both New York and Brooklyn, a determined opposition to the plans then made, an opposition which might even be found to represent the majority of their populations. So disregarding Platt's insults, threats, and innuendoes, he encouraged the opposition to present its case in all its aspects, and to make plain its numbers. As a result, for several months, the Greater New York project was discussed from pulpit and pew, from

platform, countinghouse and composing room; and the Governor listened, as Governors should, to make certain what was the voice of the people as distinct from the voice of the people's bosses.

At the end of that period, convinced that the formation of the Greater New York was desired by a majority of the people concerned, and that it was "for the common good," he was ready to push consolidation. It was now easy to work with the machine, for Platt was delighted with the Governor's change of heart. Considering his first battle won, he at once began laying his plans for pushing the bill through the Legislature and then for securing the appointment of a Commission which would obey orders. On May 15, he wrote to the Governor: "If the Greater New York bill passes today, as I am in hopes it will, the construction of that Commission is of the most vital consequence, politically, and the advice of our friends should be considered in the matter. As a matter of course, the Legislature will have to take a recess to await the action of the Mayors, otherwise the action of the Mayors is practically nullified, because it is not to be expected that all three Mayors will approve the measure. Mayor Shieren will undoubtedly disapprove."

But the Greater New York bill disappointed Platt's too confident hopes. Despite the Governor's open sympathy, despite the Platt machine, despite the tremendous support which the measure commanded in New York, it failed of assent before adjournment.

With the failure of the bill, the hopes of the Brooklyn antis increased, and the opposition to con-

solidation gained confidence of ultimate and final victory. The proponents of the measure, on the other hand, quietly allowed the question to slumber for a few months, and the Platt contingent formed a plan for gaining control of the city offices before the actual consolidation should come into effect. The following letter from Governor Morton to Platt makes abundantly clear his attitude toward this scheme:

"DEAR SENATOR: . . . I consider myself fully committed to the resolution for the adoption of the name of New York for the cities of New York and Brooklyn and for their ultimate consolidation, but I did not understand . . . that there was any intention or expectation of legislating out of office the present officials of the two cities until January 1, 1898, when the full scheme would go into effect. I do not hesitate to say that I believe any attempt to cut short the tenure of existing office-holders would be to hazard and imperil the success of the whole movement. . . .

"I am, however, quite at a loss to understand your allusion to 'Executive backfires through correspondence and members of the Legislature last winter,' in reference to New York City affairs. I never sought to set on foot such diversions through any such agencies. . . . My position last winter was taken with a view to carrying out the obligation which the party had assumed in the canvass with respect to New York City affairs. . . .

"Finally, let me beg of you not to go into this matter of consolidation with any belief that you will

not find fierce opposition, though you will find me 'out of the woods' and 'in the open' all the time."

This "fierce opposition" was voiced on January 7, by William C. Redfield, "speaking for the League of Loyal Citizens to His Honor Mayor Frederick W. Wurster." He argued that as the government of cities is the one conspicuous failure of the United States, it would be foolish to increase the difficulties of the problem by joining municipalities into a greater municipality. In Brooklyn, he argued, "the gang is out. Decency and ability reign. Why exchange for the revived rule of Tammany. . . . Consolidation for Brooklyn is not progress but suicide."

Three days later Mayor Wurster elaborated and supplemented these arguments, in a confidential letter to Governor Morton, warning him of the political dangers latent in consolidation. "Almost certainly if there is consolidation," he said, speaking as a Republican Mayor, "Brooklyn will vote against the Republican party that forced it upon her, and give the State to the Democrats. . . . Wipe out Brooklyn by putting it under the heel of Tammany Hall, and the strongest conservative force in the government of the whole State is destroyed. . . . Consolidation means the putting permanently into the hands of the Tammany investigated by Lexow—because the periods of revolt and reform are few and far between—the millions of wealth of these two great cities. Note! The modern way of Croker and his kind is to blackmail the corporations and business men. They don't steal from the city directly as Tweed did."

When the Legislature again began seriously to consider the question of making a Greater New York, a number of prominent citizens of Brooklyn appeared before its joint sub-committee on consolidation and voiced that city's protest, later printing their speeches in a pamphlet entitled "Re-Submission." And on February 5, 1896, Mayor Wurster again wrote to the Governor, to inclose a clipping from the Brooklyn *Eagle* announcing General Harrison's refusal to allow his name to be used in connection with the pending presidential nomination. The clipping listed Mr. Morton, with McKinley, Reed and Allison, as a likely candidate: but warned him that: "The most serious obstacle in the way . . . is not age, for he is ten years younger than any other public man who is as old as he is—It is this question of the consolidation of New York and Brooklyn. Thousands of Brooklynites who are Republicans will vote for Democratic candidates . . . if without her consent Brooklyn is to be effaced. Consolidation without resubmission or referendum," it pointedly added, "will prevent a united delegation from this State for Governor Morton to his party convention, and will defeat him in this State, if he should be made the nominee of his party at St. Louis."

The Brooklyn *Citizen*, an advocate of consolidation, in its issue of February 13, announced: "The Governor of the State is to be waited upon today by a committee of local Republicans, appointed by the Republican General Committee. The object is to frighten him into opposition to the proposed consolidation of the two cities. He will be

made to understand that the machine of the party in this city is so powerful that should he sign a consolidation bill he will find the presidential delegation from Brooklyn solidly against him." But it added, for his comfort and his strengthening: "Four-fifths of the Republicans of Brooklyn, outside of the mere place-holding element, are earnestly advocating the measure. . . . Nor is this condition of sentiment at variance with that among Democrats.

The explanation, in view of such popular sentiment was, obviously, that the "Ins" in the two great cities wished to stay in, and Platt and the "Outs" wished to get in. As Governor, it was Mr. Morton's duty to favor neither the "Ins" nor the "Outs," but to act with the people and for the people, and this he did, although the presidential nomination was almost at hand and he had ample justification for considering himself at least a possibility. That justification was increased, five days later, when Theodore Roosevelt, speaking at Chicago on Washington's birthday, declared: "We have a large choice of candidates to select from, but I am, first, last and always, for Governor Morton. I think he will receive the nomination at the St. Louis Convention, and once receiving it, he will be elected. He is a strong man, and deserves the support of every Republican."

On February 29, a public letter signed *Sentinel* and addressed to the Governor, pressed the Brooklyn protest fiercely. "A certain self-constituted political leader, of the most marked demagogical proclivities, and whose influence upon politics generally is . . . exceedingly unhealthful, has, it is reported, presumed to promise you—more or less—the presidency of the

United States, probably with the view of inducing you to support his schemes. His special object very likely is to persuade you, as Governor of the State of New York, to sanction a colossal political wrong against the great city of Brooklyn, the result of which he intends shall be to make him the absolute political ruler of this State. The person referred to can no more make any particular man President of the United States than he can transmute himself into an archangel. . . . Brooklyn has the inalienable right, and will insist upon it, of determining her own destiny; and will not be throttled into subjection and servitude. She will not suffer herself to be enslaved by command of Thomas C. Platt. . . . When the Brooklyn bill was defeated in the Senate on the 16th (it was the 15th) day of May last (1895), all New York journals announced that 'the Greater New York bill was dead' or 'killed' . . . and they spoke the truth." Having been thus killed, *Sentinel* argued, "there cannot rightfully be any action by the present, newly-constituted Legislature. . . . If a majority of the voters of Brooklyn really desire annexation to New York . . . this must be ascertained by an actual and *bona fide* vote; not simply assumed without warrant as a pretext for coercion."

A strong argument against consolidation was the fact that Platt contemplated the removal of the existing officials in the cities concerned, in order to make vacancies for Platt "ringers." A conversation with Edward Lauterbach brought this argument so strongly home to the Governor that, after carefully thinking it over, he wrote to that gentleman: "The impression left upon my mind upon subsequently

recalling our conversation of the other day . . . was that there might be a purpose looking to the shaping and passage of measures intended to legislate out of office present incumbents of some of the commissions or departmental offices in New York City and Brooklyn, after and assuming the approval of the Greater New York resolution in its present form. . . . I deem it proper to say to you that I should regard such a movement with great disfavor. Such a proceeding would be in direct antagonism to the policy which I declared almost immediately upon assuming office and which I have ever since maintained."

It was now just ten days before the assembling of the New York State Republican Convention, "Platt's Snap Convention" as the McKinleyites called it, which the "Boss" had summoned to meet at the Grand Central Palace in New York City on March 24 (1896). The Greater New York bill had been taken up and passed by the Senate on March 11, by a vote of 33 to 8, and it seemed certain that the Assembly would pass it within a few days. Mayors Strong and Wurster would then certainly veto it within ten days, and upon the Governor, at such a time, would fall the heavy responsibility of consenting to its failure or of insisting upon its re-passage by returning it to the Legislature.

Just at this moment, as though Fate designed to test him to the utmost, he had to decide the fate of the Raines liquor bill, the center of the fiercest and most uncompromising conflict, and held by its opponents to be Platt's way of fattening his lean cattle, the ever-hungry spoilsmen. As yet, neither the

Governor nor the bitterest opponents of this bill foresaw its most evil feature, the legal encouragement of hypocrisy. Upon the surface, it looked innocent enough, merely an attempt to minimize the evil of Sunday liquor dealing. It allowed hotels to serve liquor on Sundays, but only with meals: but failed to protect public morals by a sufficiently drastic definition of the terms "meals" and "hotels." No one was far-sighted enough to prophesy that a meal would be interpreted, within the law, as a very thin sandwich with or without butter or cheese, and a "hotel" as a place where beds were offered to ten, drinkers or drys. But even without this knowledge, it had a host of enemies, and among New York's most influential citizens.

To put the Raines bill on top of the Greater New York bill, and offer the whole to a Governor supposed to be seeking a Presidential nomination, now close at hand, was much in the nature of "cruel and unusual punishments" against which the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution guarantees protection.

The opposition, without waiting to see the real evils of the bill, denounced it blindly as a Platt-born patronage producer. "If Governor Morton approves the Raines bill and the Greater New York bill," said the Birmingham *Herald*, "he will put two large-sized nails in his political coffin." The New York *Telegram* advised him to resign his pretensions to the presidency and veto the Raines bill as "his one way to emancipate himself from a detestable, blighting, deadly machine rule." The Rev. Mr. Parkhurst, moral crusader of the period, declared that "if the Ten Commandments had been passed in the way the

Raines bill was put through the Legislature, he would break EVERY ONE of them," as immoral a statement as could be condensed into as many words; and hundreds of personal appeals, letters, interviews and messages were equally vehement in denunciation of the law.

So unexpectedly fierce were these attacks upon the Raines bill, that, on March 20, the Governor wrote to Platt:

"DEAR SENATOR: . . . Mr. Vanderbilt, Pierpont Morgan and every man with whom I have had business, social or club relations, practically the whole group of my closest friends of the last forty years, are bitterly hostile to this measure. The only one of them who favors it, that I can recall at this moment, is James A. Burden. What with this Raines bill, the Greater New York bill and the Albany police bill I cannot avoid saying that I have serious forebodings that we may lose the State this fall. Of course, I give expression to this apprehension to you in the strictest confidence. For many reasons it has seemed to me much more advisable and desirable to defer action on the Raines bill until after the State Convention has had the opportunity to express approval of it, thus making it a party measure. You cannot, nor can anyone, ignore the fact that nothing so drastic as this measure has been either suggested or confirmed by the organized action of the party. Our State Convention only expressed itself in the terse terms of which Senator Miller is the avowed author, and in my annual message there was nothing said beyond the desirability of reducing the number of drinking places in the State. Had legislation been

confined to these two principles, without impinging upon and antagonizing arbitrarily so many other interests, I am sure we should have been on safer grounds. . . ."

If Governor Morton's heart had been set upon the Presidency, which was not the case, fate could scarcely have designed a more difficult position for him. Like all Americans, he reverenced the office of President, but he knew too well the vicissitudes of politics to count upon any one factor as likely to determine the nomination of a candidate: and the evidence shows quite clearly that public interest, and not private ambition, was the focus of his attention as he entered his office on March 23, to consider the Raines bill.

While he was studying the bill for the last time, and working over the memorandum designed to explain his attitude toward the Republican leaders, Colonel Ellsworth entered, to discuss with him certain matters with reference to the Republican State Convention of the morrow. He reported that preparations for launching the Governor's presidential boom were complete; and then asked when the Raines bill would be taken up. "Just as soon as the stenographers get through," was the reply.

At eleven o'clock Colonel Marvin entered, laid the Raines bill before the Governor, the memorandum with it. The latter declared the Raines law a measure marking "the beginning of a new era in legislation in this State regulating the liquor traffic. . . . This bill changes the entire scheme, abolishes all local boards having jurisdiction to issue licenses for the

sale of liquor, and places the whole subject under State supervision."

After a glance at the bill and the memorandum, the Governor carried them into the Executive Chamber. There he read them once more, signed the memorandum, and wrote on the bill: "Approved, March 23rd, 1896, Levi P. Morton, Governor." Then, pausing for a moment, he fingered the dog-eared pages of the bill's jacket, with the remark, "This seems to have had hard usage." But its hardest usage was yet to come.

Outside the State where Platt held sway, and was held well-nigh all-powerful by his enemies, the Governor's action on the Raines law was generally regarded as wise and courageous. "The opposition to the Raines bill by the liquor and other interests," commented the Pittsburg *Press* of March 24, "was intense, but this fact does not seem to have influenced Governor Morton a moment. It is stuff of that sort that people want in a President."

Upon the day when this article appeared, and just twenty-four hours after the signing of the Raines law, the New York Republican State Convention met and found awaiting it a suggested financial plank prepared by Governor Morton and designed to commit the Republican party of New York, irrevocably, to an advocacy of sound money and a denunciation of the rising free silver heresy. On the second day of the Convention, this plank was adopted and Governor Morton was declared New York's choice for the Presidential nomination.

A few days later, lest there be any lingering doubt in the mind of Boss Platt as to whom he could not

boss, the Governor wrote to Platt concerning a certain appointment to which the latter had objected:

"He is a man of excellent record as a citizen, soldier and public official, a man who has the courage to do what is right . . . and I have yet to hear that he is not both a straight Republican and an 'organization man.'

"I am responsible in this matter. It cannot be shared by you or anyone else in the public eye, as I informed you in my letter of a week ago last Friday, discussing my probable course of action looking to the approval of the Raines bill.

"And finally, in view of all that I have done in the past, I do not feel that our friends should now be dissatisfied with or criticise my action in using my best judgment in so grave a matter as this. I must, at all events, stand upon my own judgment in this instance and accept the result. If the Governor of this State, who is to the people practically a court of last resort, is not at liberty, after giving careful consideration to all the elements bearing upon prospective executive action, to act upon his own deliberate and conscientious judgment, then he ought to resign his office."

There remained to be decided, before the Republican National Convention of June 16, the question of the consolidation of the cities, and many of those who admired the Governor and desired his nomination for the Presidency hoped also for his aid in preventing the formation of Greater New York. In this hope, the anti-consolidation leaders of New York and Brooklyn had renewed their protests early in March, conscious that the hour of crisis was at hand,

and had used every known device to defeat the Greater New York bill: but it was manifestly a losing fight. Despite their protests, it passed the Assembly as it had already passed the Senate, and was sent to the mayors, as the Constitution required. Mayor Gleason, of Long Island City, was content to allow the action of the Legislature to stand; but Mayor William L. Strong of New York and Mayor Frederick W. Wurster of Brooklyn each sent a carefully drawn document explaining in detail why, acting in the interest of his city, he must exercise his constitutional privilege of sending it back to the Legislature. The delay thus caused, however, proved brief; for the Legislature promptly repassed it, Senator Ellsworth voicing the general view when he said in explanation of his affirmative vote: "The time for discussing this bill, and forming convictions regarding it, was before the vote was taken upon its passage. Now that it has come back again by reason of its non-acceptance by the Mayors of the Cities of New York and Brooklyn, nothing can be gained by renewing the discussion which preceded our former vote. . . . The Mayors . . . define the reasons for their respective actions. The only question . . . now is whether we find in these anything which should change the convictions which prompted our action when the vote was first taken." The bill was then reënacted and sent to the Governor.

In announcing the result, the Troy *Press* of March 27 declared: "The Greater New York bill has passed the Legislature and now awaits the signature of Governor Morton to become a law. It is a measure of importance and will give to the Western Hemi-

sphere a metropolis comparable with London and Paris, and fairly promising to become the wealthiest, most populous and magnificent municipality in the world. . . . There is no human probability that the bill will encounter the veto of the venerable Governor."

With his usual caution, Governor Morton encouraged the objectors to send in their final arguments against the bill which now only awaited his signature. On April 9, Mayor Wurster wrote: "In behalf of the City of Brooklyn, I cannot accept this bill . . . because it contains no provisions requiring the terms and conditions of consolidation to be submitted to the people," the vote of 1894 having been taken under the belief that it was "a simple expression of opinion" with "no finality about it."

For weeks pleas for a veto came thick and fast. St. Clair McKelway, the able Editor of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, ardently urged that course; and Dr. Parkhurst denounced the bill as machine-made, to which the *Sun* sarcastically replied: "This clerical blatherskite says that the Greater New York bill was 'hammered through' . . . that it was passed inconsiderately and violently; and hence, inferentially, he denies its authority as legislation. In the whole history of the Legislature, however, as everybody competent to speak about the subject knows, there has been no measure more fully and carefully discussed and matured, and none as to which the methods employed have ever been fairer or more open."

A letter from Francis M. Scott, Counsel to the Corporation, emphasized the fact that the bill "has been disapproved by the Mayors both of New York

and of Brooklyn, and has been passed in the Legislature over their disapprovals by a bare majority." Furthermore, speaking as an expert, Mr. Scott assured the Governor that the Commission, to consist of the three Mayors, the State Engineer, the Attorney General and Andrew H. Green, President of the existing Greater New York Commission, plus nine persons appointed by the Governor, could not possibly "perform satisfactorily the important duty imposed upon them within the very short period of time allowed." He therefore strongly urged a veto.

The Evening *Post* thus voiced the opposition for its constituents: "The Governor may and ought to reject, even without reading it, a bill for the consolidation of New York and Brooklyn framed and pushed by a broken-down expressman living in Oswego, a little country lawyer living in Nyack, a bankrupt lawyer playing politics in New York. . . . These are not questions for Platt, the Oswego expressman, or Lexow, the Nyack lawyer, or Lauterbach, the worker, or the roaring Grady or Gruber, . . . they are not even questions for the Governor himself. His own opinion, whatever it may be, is overridden, and the Constitution intended that it should be overridden, by the vetos of the two Mayors, which have been given with the force, the gravity, and the solemnity which the occasion calls for. . . . Governor Morton has before him one of the chances which never recur in a man's lifetime. He can make himself today one of the most popular and respected persons in the State by simply vetoing the Greater New York bill." It was the *Post's* idea that the question of consolidation, certain to come in time, should be left to the

merchants, shop-keepers, tradesmen, and tax-payers of New York and Brooklyn; and that their decision should not be hurried. Therefore, a veto was the logical reply to this bill. "The 'Expressman,'" it indignantly added, "holds no public office, . . . but he will control ever so many votes at St. Louis."

Thus by skillful innuendo, unactionable in form, was the impression given that Governor Morton had handed over the fate of the two cities in return for the chance of a boss's patronage; whereas it is evident from the facts already stated that he had throughout been dominated by the desire to see that the will of the public was duly registered, and, when registered, duly recognized.

But this mass of solicited and voluntary opinion, so contradictory in its nature, needed more careful study than the Governor himself was able to give. On the one hand there was a mass of correspondence, resolutions, pamphlets, and newspaper articles urging him to sign the bill, and giving voluminous reason for that course. But an equally ardent, and perhaps equally numerous band of advisers had urged and were urging him to veto the bill. Furthermore, there was grave uncertainty as to the exact effect of the bill if signed: and the Governor finally decided to seek the advice of a number of men whom he considered capable of a sound, disinterested opinion upon all these questions. He therefore drew up a memorandum of his own opinions, and sent it to a prominent law firm, of which the leaders were Benjamin F. Tracy and Albert B. Boardman, requesting their opinion of the soundness of its reasoning and the accuracy of its phrasing. "The question of consolida-

tion having been submitted to the vote of the people of the various localities to be affected thereby," said the memorandum, "and each and every one of the localities having voted in favor of the proposition, the Legislature was required to give effect . . . to the expression of the popular will upon the subject. That expression is embodied in the present bill.

"This bill having been submitted to the Mayors of the three cities . . . two have disapproved and one has approved of the act . . . [but] neither of the Mayors objecting to the act object to the principle of consolidation, but simply to the method. . . . The only thing . . . that is accomplished by this present act [however] is the provision for the appointment of a Commission to frame and report a charter to the next Legislature. It will be for that Legislature to determine the conditions upon which such charter shall take effect. . . . It is therefore within the power of the next Legislature to meet all the objections that have been raised against the approval of the present bill by the Mayors. . . . The people and the people's representatives will then be fully informed as to the precise character of the government which they are to approve or disapprove. . . . If the charter is not adopted, the provisions in the present act . . . will necessarily fall to the ground and will have no legal effect whatever."

In reply, Benjamin F. Tracy pronounced the memorandum "excellent." "But," he added, "it seems to stop short before it is completed. I should certainly say that you fail to find in the reasons assigned by Mayors Strong and Wurster any sufficient cause for disapproving the bill. . . . I think

I should report that practically all this bill provides for is a Commission to frame a Charter and (that), until this is done and approved by the Legislature, no change whatever is effected in the government of the cities as they now stand."

Thus strengthened in his own opinion, on May 11, 1896, barely five weeks before the assembling of the Republican National Convention, Governor Morton, now the openly announced choice of New York for the presidential nomination, signed the bill which made the Greater New York a certainty. For, while the protests of the Anti-Consolidationists continued, they now ceased to endanger the movement.

Letters of congratulation flooded the Capitol at Albany: and the following answer which was sent to Cornelius Vanderbilt is probably typical of the others.

My dear Cornelius:

. . . I have been unable to make an earlier personal acknowledgment of the receipt of your note with regard to executive action on the Greater New York bill. This question has been of such grave and far-reaching importance that I have given it more thoughtful and serious consideration than I have devoted to any other single measure during my administration. You will recall that in my first and second annual messages to the Legislature, I urged action upon it and it is proper that I should here declare that it was neither initiated, suggested, nor urged upon me by any person or persons whatever in those instances. I simply took it up as a great public question which has been before the people for some years and upon which a popular vote of approval

was cast at the very election in which I was chosen Governor. . . .

Very sincerely yours,

LEVI P. MORTON.

The bitterness of disappointment caused many grim prophecies to be uttered regarding the havoc which the measure would work in the consolidated cities: but few remain today who doubt that Governor Morton's decision was wise. Almost did the future fulfill, for all the cities affected, the prediction of General Horatio King: "I predict that five years from now you will not find a man in the City of Brooklyn who will be willing to admit that he was opposed to consolidation."

Under the law thus enacted the Mayors of New York, Brooklyn and Long Island City were to be members of the Charter Commission, together with the State Engineer, the State Attorney-General and the Chairman of the former Commission, Andrew Haswell Green, and nine other persons resident in the communities to be consolidated. On June 9, Governor Morton announced the names of the nine: Benjamin F. Tracy, Seth Low, John F. Dillon, Stewart L. Woodford, Silas B. Dutcher, William C. De Witt, George M. Pinney, Jr., Garret J. Garretson, and Ashbel P. Fitch. This Committee appointed a subcommittee of its own members, with Andrew Haswell Green as Chairman, to draft the charter of the Greater New York, which, as reported on February 22, 1897, to Mr. Morton's successor, Governor Black, was chiefly the work of the Chairman.

After a few weeks of debate, the Legislature

adopted this charter, which was sent to the Mayors of the cities concerned in the consolidation. Mayor Gleason, of Long Island City, vetoed it on April 1, Mayor Strong of New York City on April 7, and Mayor Wurster of Brooklyn on May 8. But the Legislature reënacted it, and on May 5, 1897, Governor Black signed it and it too became law.

CHAPTER X

MORE THAN A FAVORITE SON IN THE 1896 CAMPAIGN

EVERY native-born American is entitled to cast his eyes upward to the White House, and for most Americans who attain high political preferment, this is the dream of dreams, the final goal which dwarfs all other offices. But Mr. Morton's ambition had as yet never contemplated the Presidency. He felt that, as New York had furnished the President for eight of the twelve years now drawing to a close with Cleveland's approaching retirement, sectional claims would demand a Republican candidate from some other State.

A Senatorship he had greatly desired, but that honor had been denied him, and he was now content to serve his term as Governor, honorably, and then to retire, to spend approaching old age at Ellerslie.

For these reasons, Platt's policy of dangling the presidency before his eyes had failed to arouse the eager desire so confidently counted upon. As Governor, he decided questions upon their merits, as he understood them, not upon the question "how will they affect my chances of the presidential nomination?" He knew too much of politics to suppose that Platt could overcome the obstacles so clearly apparent, but was too wise to disregard the power which

comes to a Governor with the fact that he is considered a potential president. In 1894, the argument, "you will be strongly placed for the nomination of 1896," had been fully employed to make the Governorship attractive to an ex-Vice President: and he had suffered it to influence, not him but those who were asked to vote for him. Throughout his term as Governor, he had heard the alluring phrase "the way to the White House," often repeated, but it had left him as unmoved, as unconvinced.

On January 9, 1895, for example, the Syracuse *Courier* had declared: "There can hardly be any doubt that the Platt forces intend to bring forward the Governor in 1896, . . . if his record as State Executive will warrant his consideration." Mr. Morton had fulfilled the condition: but took leave to doubt the result. His private papers show no evidence of a disposition to accept an invitation to become a competitor with his friend, William McKinley, whom he had long regarded as predestined for the White House, although at the time a calm comparison of the two careers might well justify the thought that of the two, his was by far the more appropriate for a presidential candidate on a sound money platform.

On September 21, 1895, Governor Morton visited Chickamauga, accompanied by twenty-five prominent New Yorkers, to speak at the opening of a national park dedicated to the memory of the great battle fought there during the Civil War. He was received with an enthusiasm which surprised him. Inspired by this Southern exuberance, perhaps a little misled by it, he made an address which greatly

increased his popularity. One sentence, too long for eloquence, but far too short for the eager ears of the South, contains the gist of his speech: "Although the great State of New York was not represented among the troops who won deathless renown at Chickamauga, the Empire State honors the soldiers of all other States, North and South, who brought here such a splendid example of human courage and martial valor in defence and maintenance of what each side believed to be a natural right and principle."

After the ceremonies, Mr. Morton paid a visit to Atlanta, and to other neighboring cities, followed by the echo of his own friendly words, and was everywhere received with an ardent enthusiasm which astonished him and his companions. "They stormed Atlanta," declared the Atlanta *Constitution;* "It is theirs by right of possession." To which should have been added, in view of the traditions of the too, too solid South, "if it is to belong to any Republicans."

To a sturdy New England mind, trained to measure emotions, and express them gingerly, such enthusiasm meant more, perhaps, than the facts justified: but added to mass enthusiasm was that of even the more sober of his fellow-guests. The Boston *Herald* declared, for example, that William McKinley placed his hand in that of Mr. Morton and said, impressively: "Governor, you would make a magnificent President of the United States, and next to myself, I would rather see you nominated than any man I know. I promise, if the chances go against me, and it appears that I cannot be nominated, to swing the Ohio delegation over to you, providing I have the power to do so."

It was, therefore, quite natural that Mr. Morton turned his face homeward, filled with new faith in his own possible future. Cleveland, with little public service to his credit, and no national or international experience, had entered the White House from Albany. Why should not he do the same? "I accompanied Mr. Morton on this trip," wrote one of his companions some months later, "and everywhere he appeared with McKinley, Morton received by far the most attention. The crowd cheered him longer and seemed to be more enthusiastic over him than any man in the party. The Governor himself noticed it, and it pleased him greatly. He remarked on it to me on our journey back. . . . I am convinced that the Governor first began seriously to consider himself in connection with the presidential office while on this trip."

Mr. Morton would have been more than human had not his popularity in the South caused him to recast his views as to his possible strength in regions where Republican electors grow: but he would have been less than Morton had he allowed this new vision to influence his decisions upon questions like the Greater New York contest which had been checked by the defeat of May 15, 1895, but was already showing signs of entering upon its second stage.

Soon after his return to Albany, the New York State Republican Convention, in preparing for the State elections of November 5, 1895, unanimously adopted the following resolution: "We heartily indorse the wise and excellent administration of Governor Levi P. Morton. He has been mindful of the desire of the people and he has been always in sym-

pathy with the best impulses of the time. The overwhelming expression of confidence given him by the people at the polls last November, shows how warmly he appeals to the popular heart. A public career of unquestioned distinction, his clear and flawless record, and his acknowledged ability warrant the highest honor in the nation, and we therefore present Levi P. Morton as the candidate of the Republicans of the Empire State for the Presidency of the United States, and we pledge him the loyal and unstinted support of New York in the coming Republican National Convention."

Although as yet the Governor had given no sign of a desire to secure the presidential nomination, foreign correspondents, in view of his wide European connections, featured this resolution as proof of his candidacy; and the news was received with enthusiasm in England, and in such other European countries as were hostile to the free silver heresy. "The Silverites are beaten," said a New York dispatch to the London *Times*, "but they retain vitality enough to give some effect to their dislikes, if not to their wishes. It may be thought prudent to nominate somebody who has 'straddled' the silver question, in which case, Governor Morton, a consistent opponent of free coinage, would, of course, be ruled out. . . . By the politicians. . . . Governor Morton is thought less available . . . than others who in other important respects are far from being his equals—(But) there are a multitude of the best people of his party who would rejoice in his nomination and election."

"He is one of those public men," wrote a London *Times* Washington reporter, "possibly less common

in the United States than in England, whose authority and reputation do not depend on his power of oratory, nor yet on great legislative experience, and still less on any gift or practice of that sort of political manipulation to which Mr. Quay, of Pennsylvania, or Mr. Platt, of New York, owe their extraordinary political chieftainship. Mr. Morton's is due to his sagacity and shrewd good sense. He has a great patience of mind, a remarkable power of observing men and things, and consequently an unusual knowledge of men." "His wealth," wrote another Washington correspondent, ". . . helped him in public life. That is no reproach. I mention it exactly as I should in the case of the great majority of English public men to whom the possession of wealth has made it possible to devote themselves to the service of their country. Wealth can open doors which poverty and even narrowness of means would close."

Ever since Mr. Morton's election last November as Governor," said the London *Times*, ". . . he has been talked of as a presidential candidate. New York is a tremendous force in national politics . . . with more votes in the nominating conventions and more in the electoral college than any other. To be Governor of New York is to be one of the most conspicuous political personages in the Union. . . . Mr. Morton has, in addition to the prestige of the office, the prestige of an enormous popular majority behind him, as Mr. Cleveland had in 1882. He has defeated Senator Hill, the Democratic candidate, by nearly 160,000 votes." To the argument that Governor Morton at seventy-one was too old for the presidency, Mr. Gladstone, then in his eighty-sixth

year and just retired from his fourth premiership, replied: "He is a mere youngster."

The friendly American press, too, praised his qualifications and lauded his prospects, incidentally, as such occasions demand, or are thought to demand, attributing to him Jove-like qualities which he knew he did not possess. But more important than all this unmeasured adulation were the measured words addressed to the Republican Club in New York City, on October 29, in which Elihu Root expressed the conviction that New York would go to the Convention with its own candidate, and that this action would place the mark of approval upon the administration of Levi P. Morton.

The New York State elections of November 5, 1895, gave added force to this prediction. "We have elected every Senator north of the Harlem river, except in Oneida County," announced Hackett, Chairman of the Republican State Committee, when the returns were in: and then, to the reporters' great delight, he sang the long meter doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

This victory of course appeared to strengthen the Governor's chances: but it really made little relative change, for McKinley and Allison showed similar results in their States. The friendly press, however, interpreted it otherwise: "The Republican victory in this State yesterday," said one New York paper, "places Governor Morton in the field as a presidential candidate in good earnest. . . . The State Convention declared for him, just as the Conventions in Ohio and Iowa did for McKinley and Allison. A leading politician remarked today that these three States had

evidently been voting for President," and it added: "It was in a large measure due to the loyalty of New York Republicans to Governor Morton. . . . When you have sifted the whole political situation you will find that the victory of Governor Morton in this State is more significant than either of those in the West. They are reliable Republican States. This is a pivotal State, but with Morton at the head of a ticket it is surely Republican."

The Washington *Star* of November 6 further interpreted the returns: "The first returns from yesterday's engagements are thought to be sufficient to answer the series of questions propounded in the *Star* Saturday respecting the presidential aspirations involved in the struggle. . . . On the Republican side, and starting again with New York, Governor Morton, it is conceded, benefits greatly by the results there. He passes from a negative to a positive presidential quantity, and dangles even Mr. Cleveland's scalp at his belt. He asked, in a letter, for a Republican majority in the State, and Mr. Cleveland, in a letter, for a Democratic majority. The response is most decidedly in Governor Morton's favor, and hence he becomes most decidedly his party's leader. Mr. Platt, it is held, must now support him in earnest. The New York delegation in the next Republican National Convention, must be a *bona fide* one, and, not one selected under a mere pretense, for trading purposes."

From this time, open declarations in favor of Governor Morton's nomination, on the part of prominent Republicans, and prominent Republican papers, were of daily occurrence; and frequent demands came, both to the Governor and to Platt, for a similar

declaration from Mr. Morton himself. On November 11, General Henry T. Noyes wrote: "I recently made an extensive Western trip, and incidentally canvassed the opinions of the men I met concerning Governor Morton's availability as a presidential candidate, and I was agreeably surprised to find a strong sentiment in his favor. He is regarded as the man who first achieved a signal victory over the Democratic machine rule in this State, and as a man who commands the respect and the admiration of all opposed to machine rule."

But the Governor of New York still failed to announce his candidacy: and was equally unresponsive to the many letters, from many sections, which lay with these upon the broad top of the big desk in Albany. Of these, perhaps the most interesting was the following, which professed to give the enlightened view of Park Row, New York City:

38 Park Row,
N. Y., Nov. 19, 1895.

Colonel Ashley W. Cole,
Albany, N. Y.

Dear Colonel:

Information has transpired which to my mind should be a very strong argument why some positive declaration should come from Mr. Morton as to whether he would accept a nomination, and give his friends permission to actively engage in work in his behalf. I write this without reference to the subject matter of our former correspondence, but only with reference to New York State.

Mr. Harrison is actually a candidate; there is not

the slightest doubt of this. His friends here are engaged in working up a sentiment in his behalf among business men. The friends of Mr. Morton, not the political leaders, but the business men of this city and State, are beginning to get anxious to hear from Mr. Morton himself what his wishes are.

I want to suggest sending out a feeler containing some declaration from Mr. Morton on this subject; not necessarily announcing himself as an active candidate after delegates, but whether he would accept such an honor or whether he would permit his friends to work in his behalf.

How would something in the *Herald* do, written by Mr. Stewart, having as a basis a little talk with Mr. Morton, whether he would accept the solid and permanent, not merely complimentary, vote of the N. Y. delegation. This would give courage to his friends in the West and South, and they would have something tangible to work on.

Mr. Reed, Mr. Allison and Mr. McKinley have announced themselves: Mr. Harrison's friends have announced his candidacy. It would be consistently dignified if Mr. Morton should do likewise, even if he said nothing more than what Mr. Allison said when he was in Chicago last.

If this suggestion meets your approval and Mr. Morton cares to see me, I can go up Friday afternoon and take Mr. Stewart along.

Very sincerely yours

H. L. S.

With his customary confidence in his own judgment, despite all urging, Mr. Morton kept his own

counsel. In the meantime, men well-informed concerning New York politics were audibly whispering that "the Boss" was not for Morton: and the press was boldy declaring the same thought in glaring headlines. On December 2, the Albany correspondent of the New York *Tribune* wrote: "Thomas C. Platt has had conferences with Matthew S. Quay, and others, which seem to point toward his laboring to nominate Thomas B. Reed, or some other candidate not living in this State, and to throw aside Mr. Morton as a candidate." The keen eyes of Joseph H. Choate had discovered what he conceived to be evidences of this same treachery, and he had boldly announced it in the public press.

But later events proved that Platt's conferences with Quay and other leaders involved no treachery to Morton. On the contrary, the elections of November 5, had caused him to see the Governor in a new light, as one whose candidacy, while not likely to make a President, might help to make a trade of value to the faithful. From that time on he became, more and more openly, the leader of the Morton campaign.

Grover Cleveland once told William C. Whitney that a political manager reared in New York was always in danger of mistaking the Empire State for the American nation, and Platt, with all his shrewdness, most aptly illustrated the wisdom of this observation. As the leader and organizer of the Morton boom he was, first, last and all the time, Platt of New York, thinking in terms of the State rather than of the nation whose opinion was to settle the issue. Platt represented, in a peculiar sense, "The Organiza-

tion" which he always wrote with a capital O—perhaps unconsciously, perhaps in pride. Morton, on the other hand, acknowledged the organization as the engine of his party, but used no capitals. Their correspondence makes it quite clear also that the Governor liked to give favors to Platt and the organization, when he could do so with a clear conscience; for the Governor was by conviction, a party man. But it makes it no less evident that he made his own decisions.

If there had been any doubt in the Governor's mind regarding Platt's support, it was removed when the latter, on December 11, in the following confidential letter, joined the ranks of those who were urging an open declaration of Mr. Morton's candidacy:

Private:

WEDNESDAY EVENING,
Dec. 11, 1895.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

I returned from Washington last night. I improved all the time while there and learned much. Had interviews with many men from several States. There is no time to be lost if you expect to enter the race, for the friends of McKinley, Reed and Allison are very busy pledging especially in the South and West. Mark Hanna of Cleveland, as *McK's* chief manager and financier, is working incessantly and vigorously. He has already captured much Southern territory (some of which he cannot hold when you get in the field). He has Arkansas, sure, under the lead of Powel Clayton. He thinks he has Alabama,

but can be disappointed in those calculations. Our mutual friend, Youngblood, is somewhat alienated by reason of our failure to reply to his letters, but I had a long session with him, of which I can give you particulars later on. The delegation from Virginia will be practically solidly under the control of Col. Lamb of Norfolk who has recently been made member of the Natl. Comm. from Va., and Chm. of the State Comm. in place of the late General Mahone. He is not committed and says he proposes to act with Senator Quay and myself. Reed has some strength in the South and so has Allison, the latter worked up by Clarkson. As I have intimated before, it is the present purpose of certain men of the "Old Guard" to stand together in the final "round-up" and secure the nomination of a stalwart Republican who will not forget his promises and *cheat his friends*. They all are well disposed toward you but up to the present time have no faith that we mean business. I am quite sure that if your friends start in with a will and show a determined purpose, they would accept you as cordially as any man in the list of candidates. I was much gratified and flattered to find that the results of political events in our State for the past year were thoroughly understood from one end of the country to the other and that my influence outside of our own State was largely increased. There is no doubt that the opinions of Senator Quay and myself are to have great weight with the St. Louis Convention. I told Mr. Reed that you were likely to be a candidate and he shook his head and said; I fear that will be fatal to my canvass, or words to that effect. I also talked with Senator Allison.

He had many warm expressions of friendship for you and I am quite sure he would prefer you if he should fail. I cannot go into detail more now.

If you are going to be a candidate and expect success you must come to a decision without further delay and let your friends go to the front. You can rely upon my best efforts, and if you say yes, I should see you soon. Missionaries (discreet men) must be sent at once into the South.

Yours faithfully,

T. C. Platt.

But the stage door in the West was opening to admit a "managing politician," built on national lines, destined soon to show a kind of campaign management hitherto undreamed of, either by expert or layman. The day of Mark Hanna was at hand. The day of Platt and Quay, "last survivors of that old coterie of politicians who so long dominated Republican National Conventions," as Senator Cullom later expressed it, was passing rapidly.

The presidential year, 1896, dawned with the Governor of New York still publicly uncommitted, despite the insistent pressure of friend and of professional politician whose business it was to pick the winner. That the winner was to be a Republican appeared evident; for President Cleveland's insistence upon the repeal of the Silver purchase clause of the Sherman bill had divided the Democratic party; the Wilson-Gorman tariff of 1894 had split it in another direction; the injunction with which the Cleveland administration had destroyed the Pullman strike had deeply offended labor; the Hawaiian and Venezuelan inci-

dents had made enemies for the Democrats; and Cleveland's four bond issues, to save the gold standard, had aroused bitter hatred on the part of the South and West.

Upon the silver question, however, the Republican party as yet furnished no more promise of what sound money men called sanity, than did the Democratic party. The late Sherman silver purchase act had been their work, and their outstanding presidential candidate, William McKinley, had voted for the Bland free silver bill of 1877, the Bland-Allison act of 1878, and, in 1890, had urged Congress to pass the Sherman silver purchase law. Furthermore, the Ohio platform of 1896 was as unsatisfactory as the Ohio candidate, ingeniously sliding over the silver question by phrase so ambiguous as to enlighten no one. What appeared to be needed was a sound money leader with an unequivocal record.

Governor Morton now decided to press his own candidacy, but in his own way, without himself personally declaring it. Therefore, there was, on January 2, a quiet dinner at the home of Chauncey M. Depew; an informal conference among the guests, Platt, Miller, Hiscock, Tracy, Lauterbach and Roberts; a few carefully worded sentences for the press; and Governor Morton's hat was in the ring.

"Governor Morton has consented to enter the race," announced Platt, in the Troy *Times* of the same day, "and his friends will now go to work for him all along the line. He will not make a formal statement himself but he has told his friends that he is a candidate. From the information I have, I am confident that the Governor will be nominated at the

St. Louis Convention. I regard him as the strongest candidate in the race."

Meanwhile, Platt busied himself chiefly with New York, a boss with his eye on his own works, while Hanna organized a nation. The scattered reports which came to Albany and to 49 Broadway from groups of Morton "boosters" touring the country were as false as though designed to mislead; for they declared McKinleyism a waning force. So far from being a waning force, McKinleyism, under Hanna's master hand, was rapidly making the nomination of Mr. Morton, or of any man save McKinley, a mathematical impossibility, quite regardless of what should be the other issues before the Convention. Richelieu ruled France by the policy of making the King first in France and Richelieu first with the King. Mark Hanna, out of his own keen consciousness, devised a similar plan and followed it, making McKinley first in America and Hanna first with McKinley.

When Hanna began to organize, there was certainly no nation-wide demand for the nomination of McKinley, a condition which rapidly changed, however, under his skillful management. Until Hanna's advent into the political field, it had generally been supposed that the United States of America was a nation too vast for effective political manipulations by the friends of one candidate in pre-convention campaigns. Therefore each candidate had been content to seek delegates in his own section alone, or at most to send out roving bands such as were now touring for Morton. But Hanna worked the entire field for McKinley, gently considerate of free silver sentiment in the South and West, honestly though

discreetly sharing the sound money sentiment of the East.

He hired a house in Georgia, brought his candidate thither and allowed Southern politicians to inspect him at close quarters. He filled the West with McKinley propaganda and vigorously invaded New York State in his fight for delegates. On March 23, just twenty-four hours before Platt's Snap Convention met in New York City, Hanna had The McKinley League of New York in session in Cooper Union, and thereafter it flooded the Convention and the State with anti-Morton propaganda. Prodigal of expense —for he knew where the "yellow-boys grew," and how to get them, Hanna placed his workers in every State, North, East, South, West, and, with the genius that had made him a terrible business competitor, "sewed up" delegation after delegation.

On March 4, 1896, Chauncey M. Depew wrote to Mr. Morton, "At present the friends of McKinley are making the most noise and largest claims. Their literary bureau is admirably managed. He is undoubtedly the strongest candidate and will start with the largest number of votes. But for the State candidates, there might be a chance of his carrying a majority on the first ballot. The bringing out of Quay, in Pennsylvania, Davis, in Minnesota, Cullom in Illinois and Manderson makes this impossible. After the first ballot, the field always works in harmony against the candidate receiving the largest number of votes, and he is rarely able to hold his own. . . . The chances are in favor, in such conditions, of the Candidate representing a doubtful state which has a large vote in the Electoral College and

who has the least personal antagonism. It is in such conditions that we have hopes of the success of your candidacy."

In the New York Republican State Convention which convened on March 24, the enthusiasm for the Governor's nomination was manifest from the first, as has been already intimated. The Raines law, signed only twenty-four hours before, had apparently been forgotten, though the Greater New York question was emphasized as still pending, by the hisses which greeted its sponsor, Senator Lexow.

On the afternoon of the second day, Senator Lexow, Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, read the platform, which was in essence: Morton, Morton, and nothing but Morton. Its one constructive plank, aside from the traditional praise of a protective tariff, was a denunciation of the free silver heresy, adapted from the memorandum which the Governor had himself drafted, and designed to force Mark Hanna and William McKinley to think seriously over certain unsound patches in the history of the latter's dealing with currency problems. It read as follows:

"The agitation for the free coinage of silver at the rate of 16 to 1 seriously disturbs all industrial interests, and calls for a clear statement of the Republican party's attitude upon this question, to the end that the trade of this country, at home and abroad, may again be placed upon a sound and stable foundation.

"We recognize in the movement for the free coinage of silver an attempt to degrade the long-established standard of our monetary system, and hence a blow to public and private credit, at once costly to the

national government and harmful to our domestic and foreign commerce.

"Until there is a prospect of international agreement as to silver coinage, and while gold remains the standard of the United States and of the civilized world, the Republican party of New York declares itself in favor of the firm and honorable maintenance of that standard."

There followed a recital of the achievements and presidential qualifications of New York's candidate for the Republican nomination, Levi Parsons Morton. "We instruct our delegates to the St. Louis Convention," it concluded, "to present him as our candidate for President, and we urge upon them to use every honorable means to secure his nomination."

The choice of an orator to nominate Governor Morton at the St. Louis Convention fell upon Chauncey Depew, who accepted the assignment in the following characteristically graceful letter:

GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT,
April 21, 1896.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

I feel both honored and highly complimented by your confidence in asking me to make the nominating speech for you at St. Louis. It gives me great pleasure to undertake the performance of a duty which is in every way so agreeable for me. Trusting the outcome may be Morton,

Faithfully yours,

CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW.

On May 11 appeared an answer to the anti-Morton circulars of The McKinley League. "McKinley," it

said, "is not a well-balanced man as Governor Morton is. . . . He is simply a clever gentleman, much too amiable and impressionable to be safely trusted with great executive office; whose desire for honor happens to have the accidental advantage of the association of his name with the last Republican protective tariff. . . . He has made all sorts of remarks and cast all sorts of votes on the money question. . . . Nobody can look at McKinley's record and read the flabby things he has said without perceiving that he has no fixed opinions." Continuing the attack two weeks later, Platt denounced McKinley as "a dangerous and misleading candidate, whose votes and speeches show that he has no settled convictions on the money question, and whose managers have endeavoured to secure support for him in one part of the country by declaring that he is in favor of silver, producing in each of such parts of the country those particular portions of his record as seemed to sustain the impression they desired to create in that particular locality. We, for our part, are fighting for a principle, than which, as we conceive it, there is none so important to the people in their daily struggle for life, and we are quite satisfied to abide the issue."

The public, however, took none too seriously such idealistic sentiments coming from the mouth of a man so bitterly opposed and so justly feared by the real idealists of the party, although those Republicans who were wise enough to look beyond the conflict for nomination, shared the fears expressed by Warner Miller, a New York delegate at large, who wrote: "His denunciations of McKinley will be the principal

campaign documents of the Democratic party." In bewilderment at this new example of Platt method, some ventured to speak of him as the actual center of the presidential stage, dwarfing the candidates into mere automatons worked by strings held in his mammoth hands. "McKinley," said the Syracuse *News*, "is merely a rallying point for the opposition to Platt. Had Platt declared for McKinley, the opposition would have centered on some other candidate."

Had the Republican party been looking for a candidate equipped by experience, consistency of career, and conscientious conviction to lead a national crusade against free silver, the choice between McKinley and Morton should have been easy, and those who felt that silver was to be the issue were logical in insisting upon the candidacy of the Governor of New York. But the battle at that stage was not over the views of candidates, or even over issues. It was a battle of management, and Platt had lost long before the National Convention was in sight. In explanation, his enemies charged treachery and double dealing. Using speculation as though it were ascertained fact, they depicted Platt as saying to the New York faithful: "If you violate instructions and vote for McKinley, you will be absolved, on condition of supporting the organization at the coming State Convention." "In consequence of such treason," remarked the Buffalo *Express*, "the Morton boom is (already) in ruins, and every sincere friend of Morton should be an anti-Platt man hereafter."

The Morton boom was indeed in ruins, but among Mr. Morton's papers there appears no evidence to

justify the accusation that Platt had sold him out, or that the Governor gave a thought to such diatribes. He faced the opening of the National Convention as a man whose hope has faded, unseasonably; but he generously refrained from blaming the failure upon anyone.

The New York *Press* of June 3 published its forecast of the relative strength of the leading candidates for the Republican nomination:

McKinley	242
Reed	12
Morton	4
Allison	4
Harrison	1
Quay	1
Bradley	1

These figures, as later appeared, greatly underestimated Mr. Morton's strength; and even more, the strength of Mark Hanna alias William McKinley. But they spoke a broad truth: for the issue was indeed settled before it was raised, and when the Convention assembled, it merely registered a choice, already predestined and foreordained, William McKinley as leader of a sound money crusade.

Three days before the formal opening of the Convention, came the suggestion that Mr. Morton be given the vice presidential nomination. But Mr. Morton had been vice president, and desired no more of it. He therefore sought to check the movement by the following telegram:

RHINECLIFF, N. Y., June 13, 1896.

HON. C. M. DEPEW,
St. Louis, Mo.

Please announce that I stated to you before you left New York that I would not under any possible circumstances accept the nomination for Vice President.

L. P. MORTON.

The Republican National Convention organized at St. Louis on June 16, 1896. The total number of votes was 895, of which 453½ were necessary for a choice under the majority rule always followed by that party. Among the earliest reports which came to the Governor at Ellerslie was one to the effect that he had taken stock of his chances and decided to stand for the vice presidency after all, to which he despatched the further denial:

RHINECLIFF, N. Y.
June 16, 9:17 P.M.

HON. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW,
Southern Hotel,
St. Louis, Mo.

Telegram received. Stories circulated are unfounded. Have rescinded nothing.

L. P. MORTON.

The preliminaries were not disposed of before it became apparent to all with eyes to see, that it was Mark Hanna's convention. He had first raised a "pony purse" of $65,000 with which to pay certain

of McKinley's debts, acquired by the latter's having gone security for friends; he had gathered three and a half million dollars, the biggest campaign fund, to that date, in the history of what is called civilization; and, according to the statement of his biographer, Croly, had saved it for the final campaign, paying the heavy expenses of the pre-convention campaign out of his own capacious pockets. By these and similar methods, he had built up about the person of McKinley an organization well-nigh invincible.

At St. Louis, Platt and Hanna at first crossed swords, largely because Platt, not yet conscious of the fact that Hanna carried a gold standard plank in his pocket, distrusted McKinley's attitude on the currency issue, and used Morton's unquestioned soundness to help bring about an unequivocal declaration against free silver. According to a contemporary report, Platt informed Hanna of New York's uncompromising demand for a gold standard platform and added: "If McKinley agrees to such a declaration, he can have New York State's vote on the second ballot." "Otherwise," he warned, "it will go to a man who will not straddle."

As Hanna was as determined as Platt himself that there should be no straddling, he willingly consented to the agreement, and to similar agreements with other gold standard delegates.

The scene of formally adopting this gold plank was dramatic almost beyond precedent. New York and New England demanded "no compromise": Senator Teller and his fellow-silverites demanded "no compromise": but the difference between them

was as wide as theory could make it. The former meant that nothing but a gold platform would be accepted: the latter meant that only an open and unequivocal declaration in favor of "the free, unrestricted, and independent coinage of gold and silver at our mints at the ratio of 16 parts of silver to 1 of gold," could keep the party whole.

When the vote, "the gold plank or Teller's silver substitute," was taken, it showed 818½ for gold to 105½ for silver. Senator Teller then rose, shook hands with the Chairman and, with tears streaming down his cheeks, left the Convention, accompanied by Cannon and thirty-two other silver delegates. For the first time since 1872, there was an important bolt from a Republican National Convention.

The platform, however, did not obtrude the silver issue, an element of danger, due to divided counsel. Of its 30 paragraphs only two mentioned currency, and the secession of Senator Teller and his free silver allies was not due to pressure on the part of sound money men, but rather to an excess of zeal for a cause that was lost, so far as that Convention was concerned, as soon as Mark Hanna had planned his pre-convention campaign.

True to his promise, at the proper time, Mr. Depew mounted the platform and presented for the presidential nomination "New York's choice, New York's Governor, Levi Parsons Morton." Depew was an effective speaker, and he received a gratifying ovation: but he was shrewd enough to see that he spoke to minds closed, for the most part. Hanna's fixed delegations were fixed to stay, though the much-heralded solidarity of New York was the merest

fiction. Seventeen New York delegates, when the first ballot came, were registered among the 661½ votes which made McKinley the candidate. Morton's strength was 58 votes all told, both Reed and Quay leading him.

The announcement of McKinley's nomination found Governor Morton in the library at Ellerslie, surrounded by his family. He read the telegram with the remark: "Well, McKinley is nominated. . . . It was a foregone conclusion." That afternoon, he gave out a statement containing his analysis of the situation: "The outcome of the Convention has been practically a foregone conclusion for a week past. Conceding that Mr. McKinley's nomination was already assured, the chief cause for public congratulations . . . is the unqualified declaration for the single gold standard of value. In my opinion no greater public danger has menaced this nation since the close of the Civil War than that which impended while this contest between adherents of the gold and silver policies was at issue.

"Now that it has been decided by an overwhelming expression of the party's representatives in convention, the country's interests are more secure both at home and abroad, and the Republican party is found not wanting in the assertion of its loyalty to the welfare of the people. I expect the triumphant election of the ticket."

McKinley promptly let it be known that Morton's nomination as Vice President would be pleasing to him: but, in the face of the Governor's repeated refusals, it was inevitable that this honor too should pass to another, and Garret A. Hobart of New Jersey

was chosen. Late that afternoon, Governor Morton sent the following telegram:

RHINECLIFF, N. Y.
June 18, 5:55 P.M.

HON. WM. MCKINLEY,
Canton, Ohio.

You may recall my remark made in 1879 as we sat side by side in the House of Representatives, that I expected to see you some day President of the United States. Please accept today my congratulations.

LEVI P. MORTON.

The reply of the Presidential nominee was as follows:

CANTON, OHIO,
24th June, 1896.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR MORTON,

Your telegram of congratulation is acknowledged with profound gratitude.

Yes, I do recollect what you once said to me in 1879, and it was very generous in you to remind me of your prophecy.

Your words of good cheer I accept as expressions of the sentiments of the Republicans of the Great Empire State.

With very sincere regards to Mrs. Morton and your family, believe me, my dear Governor, to be

Yours sincerely,

W. MCKINLEY.

HON. LEVI P. MORTON,
Albany, N. Y.

The St. Louis Convention had scarcely adjourned before Mr. Morton was besieged by personal friends, by party-loyalists and especially by McKinley leaders to stand for a second term as Governor; but he resolutely declined. On July 23, one anxious McKinleyite from "up-state" wrote:

Confidential

ROCHESTER, N. Y.,
July 23, 1896.

THE HONORABLE LEVI P. MORTON.

MY DEAR SIR:

I trust you will re-consider your determination not to be a candidate for Governor again. In the present situation of affairs, you ought to be renominated, and you can get a larger vote than any other candidate. Your nomination will do more good to the national ticket than any other. . . . There is trouble to be feared, very serious trouble, if Aldridge should be nominated. He would be beaten, in my judgment, and his nomination would hurt the M'Kinley ticket. The same might be said of some of the others, although in a much smaller degree. If you should change your purpose, and decide to take a re-nomination—and all the usages of the party would entitle you to it—the other candidates would undoubtedly retire from the field. I hope, for the good of the general cause, you will waive any objection you have to a second term, and take the nomination.

Truly yours,

JOHN VAN VOORHIS.

On July 29, Civil Service Commissioner Burt wrote: "I learn that many independent voters of both parties are anxious that you may accept a renomination, believing that it would greatly aid in the vital conflict against Socialism, Anarchy and financial folly." Charles E. Fitch, editor of the Rochester *Express*, wrote, a few days later: "Your honorable career makes your name one which would compel Republican masses to your support. . . . I am sure that all other candidates would at once retire from the field. My dear Governor, do think upon this, I implore you." And Platt, after careful inspection of the situation, expressed this opinion: "If you were to stay in office another term, you would capture all the Democratic officials in and out of office by your magnificent diplomacy."

On July 31, Fitch sent a second appeal: "I now see by a dispatch from Albany in the New York *Sun* that only your consent is necessary to make your re-nomination sure, and that the Convention may even nominate you without your consent. I know that you ought to be nominated. It is the one thing of paramount importance for the weal of the party and the honor of the State. . . . Thousands of Republicans feel that the party is in an emergency, from which you can relieve it. Do you not see your duty in the premises?"

But even such arguments, the Governor felt free to disregard. He had done his full duty to nation, state and party, and desired now only retirement from public life. He therefore prepared a letter which he sent, in substantially the same form, to Bliss, Depew, General Woodford, and Thomas C. Platt. It reads as follows:

August 20, 1896.

My dear . . . . . .

I fear, from letters received from mutual friends, and other indications, that an attempt may be made to secure my renomination at Saratoga as a compromise candidate. As you are well aware, I have repeatedly stated that I am not, and could not be a candidate. That question was definitely settled in my own mind when I became a candidate for the Presidency, and aside from any personal or family reasons, I could not now accept a renomination if tendered. I must therefore, in some discreet and proper way, either before or at the Convention, make my position clear and unequivocal; otherwise I might, if the movement is seriously contemplated, be placed in a very embarrassing position. As Mr. Depew presented my name at St. Louis, and has been elected a delegate, I have, with a desire to guard against the possibility of being placed in an embarrassing position, requested him to withdraw my name in case it should be presented by anyone as a candidate at the Convention. I have also requested him to confer and advise with you before the meeting of the Convention.

Very sincerely yours,

Levi P. Morton.

Into the campaign for the election of McKinley and Hobart, Mr. Morton entered with an enthusiasm which showed no trace of resentment at his own rejection. To his mind it was a fight for the principles of honesty, and as such demanded all the energy of every sound-money American, regardless

of party. "In this campaign," he wrote to the Honorable George E. Green, "party lines are largely obliterated. Partisanship is forgotten in the higher purpose of maintaining the honor of the nation. . . . In such a crisis as that which now confronts us, all citizens who believe in the maintenance of a sound financial system have a common interest, and should be invited to join us in vindicating what we believe to be the true American policy. . . . We . . . rejoice that we are able to demonstrate to the world that, upon issues involving a stable system of finance, the dignity of the nation and the supremacy of law, our people are patriots rather than partisans. . . . Patriotism rises above partisanship, and we rejoice in the prospect that the financial heresies of the hour will be overwhelmed." And in the November elections they were overwhelmed. Almost fourteen million citizens cast their ballots, a record unprecedented in any popular election in any land. Of these 7,111,607 voted for McKinley and 6,509,052 for Bryan. The Eastern, Middle and Central Northwestern States, however, went Republican by magnificent majorities; and in the electoral colleges McKinley received 271 votes to Bryan's 176. For the time at least the free silver heresy was buried.

The election over and the choice of a successor made, Governor Morton began at once to arrange for the day of his retirement. The plea for last hour appointments, so difficult to resist, he was able to meet with the declaration thus formulated in a letter to Platt, dated November 18, 1896: "I have never made an appointment to any office having a salary

attached which could be reasonably claimed as one of a personal character."

On January 1, 1897, Governor-elect Frank S. Black appeared in the Assembly Chamber, at Albany, for his inauguration as Governor of New York, and "the chief magistrate of yesterday" met the "chief magistrate of today" in the interesting ceremony of transfer, illustrating the basic principle of government, "men change, but systems continue," to paraphrase the opening sentences of the retiring magistrate's brief address. His closing words to Mr. Black show the deep harmony which he left behind: "You will have the support of a Legislature, both Houses of which will be in full accord with the will of the people; . . . there are in prospect no bitter contentions or controversies, no serious differences on public questions to be fought out through your administration."

An editorial in the *Commercial Advertiser* thus summed up Mr. Morton's career as Governor: "Some of the enactments which bear the approving signature of Levi P. Morton mark an epoch in State affairs and are destined to become historic. Notably is this the case with the act which brought a Greater New York into municipal existence. That measure was a piece of statesmanship whose benefits can be fully understood only with the lapse of years. Hardly inferior to it in far-reaching consequences are the Power of Removal bill and the Police Magistrate bill, both of which became enactments early in the present administration. By the former this City has been enabled to establish a new and higher standard of municipal government, and by the latter the scandals

and outrages of the old police court system have been wiped out and the dispensation of even-handed justice for rich and poor alike made possible.

"Among other statutes to which Governor Morton has affixed his signature are the Tenement House Commission bill, the Rapid Transit act, the bill authorizing the construction of a bridge across East River, the Gray Racing bill, the Anti-Trust act, the New York School Reform bill and the Sweatshop bill.

"Another measure of vast importance which is to be credited to the administration of Governor Morton is the Ballot Reform law, which, together with other enactments relating to naturalization and registration, has reduced election abuses to a minimum and crushed out bribery and corruption at the polls. In the passage of these enactments by the Legislature the influence of Governor Morton was a potent factor, and in some instances he openly and emphatically advocated them.

"With regard to the Raines Liquor Law, it is needless to say more now than that Governor Morton signed it with the honest conviction that it would advance the cause of public morality and order. That it has utterly failed to accomplish this purpose is unquestionably a disappointment to him, and, no doubt, he would favor its amendment or repeal were he to continue in office."

As he retired, there was a gratifying unanimity of praise in the press. "Few Governors of New York have been able to look back upon their records with as much satisfaction as does Mr. Morton," said one. "Not a single scandal of any kind mars the history of his term of office, and that term is filled with wise

and commendable acts." "To him," wrote another, "more than to any of his predecessors, has been accorded a genuine warmth of personal affection. . . . The general verdict is 'well done,' and the facts fully sustain the finding."

Mr. Morton was now seventy-two years old, but of surprising vigor. His constitution had cast discredit upon more than one prophet of evil who had mistaken passing illnesses for death-bed scenes. In one of his inimitable letters to Henry Adams, John Hay thus moralized from one of these instances: "Did I not sit, with profound emotion, at the death-bed of Levi P. Morton, and is he not—at the hour which is—all sorts of potentialities and possibilities? There is nothing like being given up by the doctors. It is a certificate of longevity."

CHAPTER XI

THE MORTON TRUST COMPANY

THROUGHOUT his life Mr. Morton had displayed, in striking manner, two characteristics: the ability to work and the gift of easy relaxation. He therefore returned to New York, after the inauguration of his successor, Governor Frank S. Black, possessed of abundant energy and with his interest in life, the strenuous as well as the lighter aspects, unabated. Like most men who face great problems of business, politics or diplomacy, he had often dreamed of the leisure which was now his. But as the months passed, the task of perfecting his model estate on the Hudson, combined with an interesting social life, again failed to satisfy him. The longing for action grew stronger, day by day, and at last he resolved to renew his active connection with big business, where his first laurels had been won. He therefore threw himself once more into the affairs of Morton, Bliss and Company, and quickly demonstrated the fact that neither vision nor boldness had departed from him with advancing years. The recent death of his able partner, George Bliss, had left him the one dominating force of the organization which now faced new conditions.

In earlier days it had been the general custom for men of means to control the use of their own money, retaining in their own hands the direction of the business in which it was employed. But Mr. Morton saw clearly that in American financial circles there had come a new era. Big business had become, more and more, consolidated business, and it was now the custom for capital to be invested in organizations whose activities were directed by groups of specialists. Writing in 1911, Mr. Carl Hovey, in his *Life Story of J. Pierpont Morgan*, declared: "One hundred and ten of the country's largest corporations, with a capitalization of $7,300,000,000, are owned by 626,934 stockholders. The average stockholdings are 116 shares. . . . Less than a dozen men absolutely control fifty-four companies, with a total capital of $4,157,000,000, and a total number of stockholders of 288,160. Of the fifty-six great industrial companies, with a capital of $3,143,000,000, and an extended list of stockholders, a few men are in control."

To meet the competition which such consolidation had developed, and at the same time preserve the personal monument which his banking success had created, Mr. Morton decided to dissolve the firm of Morton, Bliss & Co., effect a combination with other financial leaders of New York, and found a modern institution, to be known as The Morton Trust Company. When every detail had been perfected, the directors chosen, the reserve fund guaranteed, and the working capital secured, he issued to the press a brief announcement that The Morton Trust Company would be ready to do business on October 1, 1899. It was a daring venture for a man of Mr.

Morton's advanced age, and was taken with full knowledge of the fact that it might mean the loss of the valuable Bliss connection, the temporary absorbtion of money, and, perhaps, the alienation of friends connected with the London branch of Morton, Bliss & Company.

The Morton Trust Company however soon won a high place in American financial circles, and its business activities reached to many lands, the business of floating government bonds having been found safe and highly profitable. In such matters, Mr. Morton's opinion was generally given great weight, in view of his long and successful experience. Upon one occasion, however, certain San Domingo bonds, practically though not officially guaranteed by the United States Government, were offered, and Mr. Morton secured an option upon several millions of them for the Morton Trust Company. Certain members of the Board of Directors, however, expressed doubts regarding the soundness of the investment. After listening to a full discussion of the matter, and patiently explaining his grounds for desiring immediate action, Mr. Morton suddenly settled the matter by the declaration: "If the Morton Trust Company does not want the loan, I will take it." The Executive Committee at once passed a resolution approving the loan, and the matter was concluded. This action was characteristic of Mr. Morton's methods during the period of his career: such a decision was somewhat exceptional, however for a man of his years.

Thus, for several years, the Morton Trust Company was conducted under Mr. Morton's supervision, and many of its depositors relied upon it, in those

days of financial uncertainty, chiefly because of their faith in Mr. Morton. Ex-Governor Westmoreland Davis, of Virginia, upon one occasion, was requested by his sister-in-law to go to the Morton Trust Company and remove her money, as a panic then in progress had rendered her anxious regarding its safety. He later told Mrs. William C. Eustis of his passing through the crowded bank, on his way to the room of one of the high officials with whom he intended to speak. "Through the open door he saw my father sitting at his desk, in a large, almost empty room. There was something in his demeanor, something in the atmosphere of calm surrounding him, something, I suppose, of his inherent strength and integrity showing in his face which made an impression. At all events, whatever it was, Mr. Davis was arrested in his purpose, and a few moments later he left the Bank, his sister-in-law's money still in its vaults, perfectly safe, he felt, in a concern headed by a man of my father's stamp."

The panic, as events progressed, served rather to strengthen than to weaken the Morton Trust Company. Theodore Roosevelt, then Governor of New York, instituted an investigation into the affairs of the Standard Trust Company, a rival institution, and during its progress, William C. Whitney and Thomas F. Ryan accepted an offer to join the Morton Trust Company, Mr. Ryan with the title of Vice President. Their wealth and influence in financial circles greatly increased the business of Mr. Morton's company; but their coming altered its character. Thenceforth, it was a trio, Morton, Ryan and Whitney, who directed its affairs.

By 1904, the increase of business had made necessary the election of another Vice President to lighten the burden of Mr. Ryan's work, and Mr. Elihu Root, an influential member of the Board of Directors, recommended Charles H. Allen, of Lowell, Massachusetts, who had made a national reputation as Governor of Porto Rico in the days following its annexation to the United States. In announcing his election to the Vice Presidency of the Morton Trust Company, Mr. Root wrote, on January 7, 1904: "It is a very strong and successful company, with $2,000,000 of capital, somewhere in the neighborhood of $6,000,000 surplus, and about $40,000,000 of deposits, and very strong connections in the financial districts of New York." Governor Allen accepted the offer, and soon became Mr. Morton's most trusted adviser.

During all the years that had passed since Mr. Morton and Mr. Junius Spencer Morgan entered as partners into the firm of James M. Beebe & Co., the financial genius of J. Pierpont Morgan had been revealing itself. As a boy of thirteen, he had accompanied his father to Boston, an unsuspected, potential power. By rapid strides, after his return from the University of Göttingen, he had risen to a commanding position in the financial world, proving himself the very incarnation of the consolidation tendencies which followed the American Civil War. By 1871, his face had become as familiar to the world as those of Grant and Sherman, and his influence was recognized in the affairs of many nations. He was now universally thought of among the personalities which had dominated history. Mr. Morton's rise in

MRS. MORTON, 1913

the world of high finance had been spectacular: but that of J. Pierpont Morgan had been unique.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Mr. Morgan had entered upon the final stage of his career, which contemplated a gigantic centralization of bank control. To that end he designed a consolidation of the Morton Trust Company, the Fifth Avenue Trust Company, and the Guaranty Trust Company, an arrangement which meant a new banking establishment with over $150,000,000 of resources. This consolidation, with the Astor Trust Company, the Bankers Trust Company, and the Liberty National Bank, which he already controlled, would mean the financial dictatorship which he sought, if we may accept the interpretation of his biographer, Mr. Carl Hovey. Although masterful, when intent upon such a scheme, Mr. Morgan was constructive rather than ruthless in his use of power, and in 1909 he offered the Morton Trust Company terms which meant not alone incorporation with honor, but with profit, and the chance of greater profits in future.

The Directors of the Morton Trust Company at once declared in favor of accepting the offer: but Mr. Morton was not satisfied. He felt that the stock of the Morton Trust Company should command a higher ratio of exchange than the 750 to 1000 which Mr. Morgan proposed, and he was reluctant to have his name disappear with the establishment of the new institution. In company with Governor Allen, therefore he paid a visit to Mr. Morgan to discuss these questions.

On his way back to the office, after an interview which had altered nothing, Mr. Morton remained long silent, deep in thought. Finally, he turned to

Governor Allen with the remark, "perhaps Morgan is right," and in that sentence he renounced the desire that he might naturally have felt for a personal memorial in the name of the new corporation. He still objected to Mr. Morgan's evaluation of the stock of the Morton Trust Company, however, and his objections were not removed by his friends' argument that his private holdings would be safer in the new corporation, in view of his own inevitable retirement in the near future.

When at last the Directors of the Morton Trust Company assembled for a final discussion of the offer, and for a decisive vote, Mr. Morton made the following speech, a reluctant acceptance of their wishes:

"GENTLEMEN:

"I do not feel called upon to comment particularly on the figures used in the plan outlined as a basis of exchange of Morton Trust Company shares with those of the Guaranty Trust Company, in the proposed merger of the two companies. I may be pardoned, however, if I remark that unless it is proposed to capitalize some sentiment or emotion, I see no reason in the figures themselves, why the shares of the Morton Trust Company should not be of equal value with those of the Guaranty Trust Company. I leave an analysis of the figures, however, to the technical accountants, who make it their business to examine and explain such things.

"I cannot stand in my place, and seriously recommend a plan of merger which when completed, retires from the business world a company bearing my name, without a word of regret.

"The Morton Trust Company has been the pride

of my heart. It has represented the supreme interest of my business life. I have watched and participated in its development and nurtured its growth with a personal interest I cannot adequately describe. Whether or not I wish it, I am conscious of the trend of the times, and I realize that probably the time has come when I should be relieved of the details and burdens of an active business life. Those of my associates who have been longest with me agree with this view, and after consultation, we have agreed to the plan of merger you have considered, and you are asked to ratify, believing it to represent, under present conditions, the wisest and best disposition of this company.

"The Morton Trust Company never stood in higher credit, or in a more liquid condition than at this moment. Of its large assets, more than seventy per cent could be converted into cash at once. It has not a single bad loan on its books. The eleven millions of investments are carried at such a conservative valuation, that taken at the market prices of today, would add over a million dollars to the liquidating value. The comparison of business of the two companies during a period of six years, shows that the Morton Trust has earned a great deal of money, and its earnings for the past year, with one exception, have been the largest in its history. When one charged with responsibility is turning over to another such property, it is a pleasure to hand it to its future managers in such splendid condition.

"Gentlemen, I have been in active business many years. I look back with satisfaction and pride at the record, and in particular at this moment, to my

connection with the Morton Trust Company. It has been congenial work, because I have always had the loyal support and active assistance of the Board of Directors. I take this occasion to pay my compliments to the members of the Board, and to express my appreciation of the courtesy and kindness ever shown me, and in retiring from the active executive work, I desire to extend to each member my deepest and heartiest wishes for his personal welfare and happiness.

"To those who are hereafter to assume the responsibility I offer my best wishes for their continued and permanent success."

This speech was his farewell to active business, and it shows the characteristics which had won him success at every turn of the long trail which he had followed in his business life: kindly consideration for his associates, the power of prompt decision and a personal knowledge of detail. These qualities, combined with the honesty demanded by the Puritan conscience, had enabled him to gain great wealth and wide influence, without the display of the ruthlessness which too often distinguishes masters of finance. One sentence later spoken in his praise by Elihu Root gives the keynote of his long business and political career: "He has never ridden to success on the failures of others."

The consolidation was soon effected and the Guaranty Trust Company absorbed the Morton Trust Company: but Mr. Morton, despite his advanced age of eighty-five, was elected Chairman of the new Board of Directors, an honor which Mr. Morgan and his associates considered his due.

With the end of the Morton Trust Company, however, Mr. Morton's active business career ended. Only his name remained, honored in the directorate of the greater institution as the symbol of the best type of business enterprise. His private affairs were turned over to the management of his nephew, Mr. Morton Minot, and his friend, Governor Allen, leaving him free to devote his time to his family, his charities, and his travels.

CHAPTER XII

LAST DAYS

History records few instances of men of prominence who have retained as octogenarians an enthusiasm for foreign travel: but of these Mr. Morton was one. Upon completion of the work of winding up the business of the Morton Trust Company, he revisited his favorite European haunts, and sought again old friends and old companions. William, Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston, Massachusetts, has published an incident connected with Mr. Morton's visit to Rome during these sunset days, when the Archbishop was himself a resident of the College of Rome. He "used to come frequently in the late afternoon for a cup of tea and a cigar. I see him now, rather feeble and old, but very distinguished looking, seated in a great arm chair, pensive, reticent, and often reminiscent of the days when he was Vice President. I remember well one afternoon when I found myself out of the good cigars which I kept for my guests, with only a box of my favorite, Minghettis, very mild and very cheap, which I habitually smoked myself. . . . I handed Mr. Morton the box with an inward chuckle at what might be the result. He took a cigar, lit it, puffed leisurely as

MR. MORTON AT THE AGE OF NINETY

he looked at the fire in the grate and said nothing. After a few moments he puffed again, took the cigar from his mouth and looked at it, long and mysteriously. . . . 'What an excellent cigar,' he said, gently. . . . 'Do tell me where you get this brand,' . . . The charity which had long ago overcome the Puritan prejudice against a Roman Catholic Cardinal was broad enough to cover a three cent Italian cigar smoked in good company."

In 1910, when Mr. Morton was in his eighty-sixth year, he narrowly escaped death in a railway accident at Bernais, in France. As he emerged, uninjured, from the débris where many lay imprisoned, and some lifeless, his first words were, "Isn't there someone whom we can help?"

Upon their return to New York, Mr. and Mrs. Morton became deeply interested in the plan to build a great cathedral on Morningside Heights, to be called St. John the Divine. Considerable progress had already been made in the work of raising funds for construction but much remained to be done. Dr. Huntington, of Grace Church, was among the active promoters of the campaign, and he imparted his enthusiasm to Mr. and Mrs. Morton. Younger than her husband by twenty-two years, and religiously devout, Mrs. Morton devoted herself to the cause with an energy no longer possible for him. Every detail interested her, and she devoted no inconsiderable portion of her own inheritance to it.

Mr. Morton's gift made possible the building of the choir of the Cathedral. He also gave the Skinner organ, in memory of his daughter Lena, and the altar and reredos. His last public appearance

was in 1911 when he attended the service of Consecration. As he stood in the centre of the chaos of rising columns, surrounded by a multitude of all races and kindreds and tongues, listening to the solemn service of dedication, his mind must have carried him back to another sacred edifice, a little wooden church at Winchendon, where as a child he had earned his first pennies by ringing the bell. Seventy-four years had passed since he summoned the worshippers to his father's services, but they had taken from him none of his faith in God, none of his confidence in the unseen world which now lay so near; for he had passed the "four-score years" which Moses, in the ninetieth Psalm, had set as the limit of strength, and knew that the end could not be far distant. An old family servant, observing the innate gentleness of his soul, had recently remarked: "He was trained before he was born," and his lifelong adherence to the Puritan code in which he had been trained, lent color to that sweeping generalization upon the power of heredity.

Two years later, Mr. Morton was taken seriously ill, and his recovery seemed most improbable. His remarkable constitution, however, again saved him, and he recovered such health as is possible for a man of eighty-nine years. In commenting upon this news, the New York *Sun*, in an editorial entitled "An American," declared: "Were we asked who among all the men now living most completely typified America, one of the first names occurring to us would be that of Levi Parsons Morton. His history is as romantic as the tales that delighted the old fashioned boys of a former

generation. His independence, uncompromising honor, shrewd business sense, open handed generosity; his quick sympathy and unfaltering patriotism; his broad knowledge and native wit; his failures and his successes; his public services and his private ambitions; somewhere there should be a writer to weave them into a tale worth telling. His rise to power through his own strength and indefatigable industry; the record of what he has done for himself and for others; his notable practicableness; his inexhaustible store of that rarest of possessions, common sense; his simplicity and genuineness; his biography would tell a story no mere imagination could equal. What a splendid thing his autobiography would be, unedited and preserving all his characteristics!"

Another editorial of the same date declared: "There is no man of vast wealth living in this community today who has used the means at his command more wisely or beneficially than he, and here and there, all over this broad land, may be found scores upon scores of people whom he has directly but quietly aided in the strenuous battle of life; many a man whom he has cheerfully assisted out of the slough of despond; many a man and woman ready to rise and call him blessed because of his countless benefactions. In all his cheery beneficence, Mr. Morton never questioned an applicant for his bounty, how he came to be down or out, nor what his political or sectarian leanings might be. In every relation of life, mercantile, diplomatic or denominational, Mr. Morton's name was ever a synonym for fair dealing, incorruptibility and executive capacity. In private life he was ever one of the most

lovable and unostentatious of men, and in public service whether, as our representative in France, Vice President of the United States, or Governor of the great State of New York, every duty he discharged uprightly and with rare general acceptance."

Such praise was fitly bestowed. By a long life of conscientious labor he had won the right to the proved title of the best type of American. He had lived under every administration from James Monroe to Woodrow Wilson; had touched business in manifold branches and had made a name which was the symbol of upright dealing on both sides of the Atlantic. In public office he had faithfully served the people, locally, nationally and internationally; and throughout, the keynote of his successes, the secret of his lasting friendships had been character.

Burke once declared "the nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath," and by this standard, too, Mr. Morton's achievements were numerous and important. In every community in which he had dwelt remained impressive monuments to his unostentatious generosity, the last being the Memorial Library which he erected at Rhinecliff, symbol of his lifelong devotion to the cause of popular education.

In 1918 came a sorrow from which he could not recover. In August his wife died at Ellerslie, and with the ending of the companionship of forty-five years, life for him was over.

Thenceforth he paid little attention to affairs, his friend Governor Charles H. Allen having received power of attorney to act for him. He made yearly visits to Washington, which he had established as his residence; but Ellerslie was the

home of his choice. The people of the village, the porters on the trains running from New York, were personally known to him; their little troubles interested him; and to them, as to so many of his relatives, near and distant, he was a generous and silent benefactor.

During the last years of his life, it became the custom for the school children of the neighboring village of Rhinecliff to visit Ellerslie each year, on May 16, in honor of his birthday. On May 8, 1920, he arrived from Washington, slightly indisposed, but eager to welcome the accustomed visit soon to be made. But when the sixteenth came, his ninety-sixth birthday, his condition was critical. The children, however, were not sent away. They were given their usual reception: only the customary greeting from their aged host was lacking. Their young voices had scarcely ceased to resound through the spacious grounds when the crisis came, and, at eight-thirty that same evening, Levi Parsons Morton passed peacefully away.

APPENDIX A

By his first wife, Lucy Kimball, Levi P. Morton had a daughter, Lucy, who died in infancy.

By his second wife, Anne Livingston Street, he had six children:

1. Edith Livingston, who married William Corcoran Eustis of Washington, D. C., in 1900, and had five children. Helen, Margaret, Morton, Edith, and Anne.
2. Lena Kearney, who died in 1904.
3. Helen.
4. Lewis Parsons, who died in 1877.
5. Alice, who married in 1902 Winthrop Rutherfurd of Allumuchy, New Jersey, had six children, and died in 1917. Lewis, who died in 1919. Winthrop, John, Hugo, Alice, Guy.
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